

SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ **Book No.** _____

Acc. No. _____

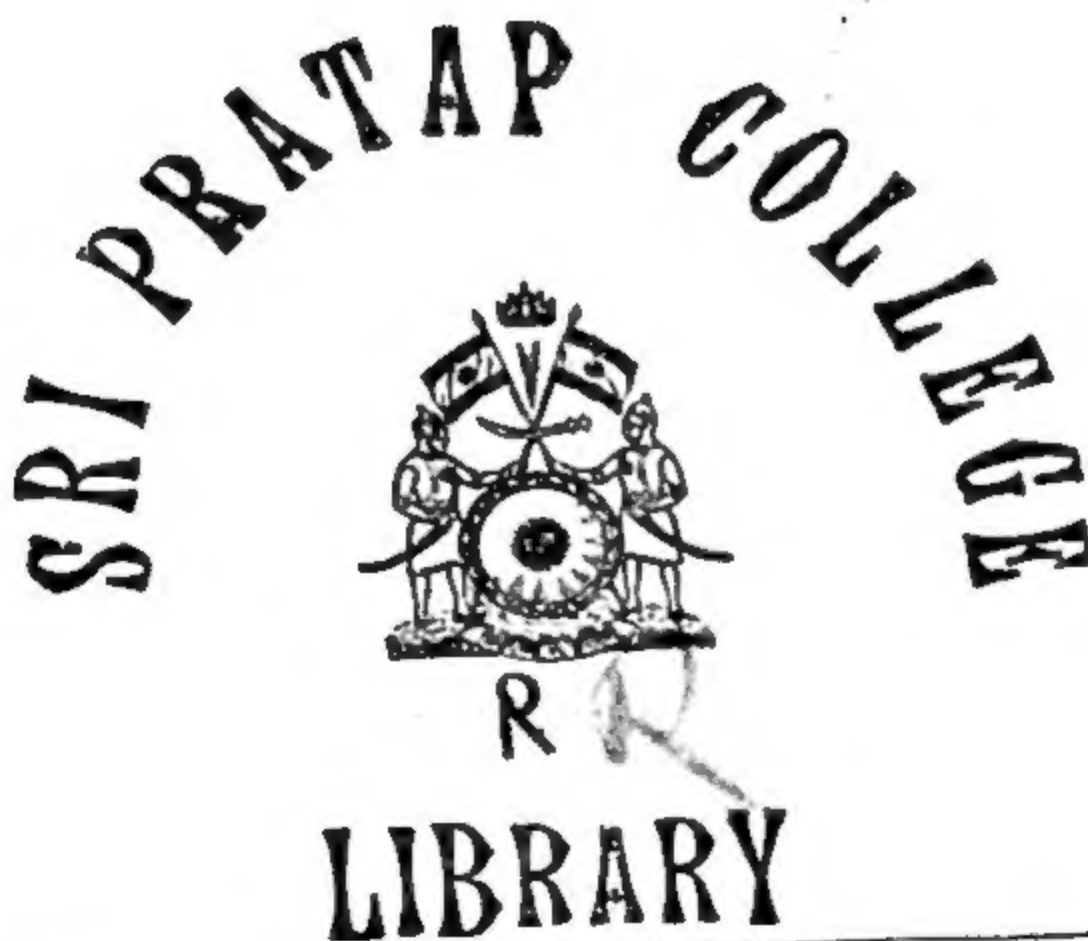
This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]

TO THE READER.

K I N D L Y use this book very carefully. If the book is disfigured or marked or written on while in your possession the book will have to be replaced by a new copy or paid for. In case the book be a volume of set of which single volumes are not available the price of the whole set will be realized

O. L. 29.



Class No.....68917.....

Book No.....T93M.....

Acc. No.....15188.....

SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ **Book No.** _____

Acc. No. _____

This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]

SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ **Book No.** _____

Acc. No. _____

This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]

SRI PRATAP COLLEGE LIBRARY
SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ **Book No.** _____

Acc. No. _____

This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]

TURGENEV

by the same author

★

CHEKHOV

STANISLAVSKY ON THE ART OF THE STAGE

STANISLAVSKY: A LIFE
(MacGibbon & Kee)

CHEKHOV THE DRAMATIST
(John Lehmann)

★

Translations

CHEKHOV:
THE SEAGULL
(Dennis Dobson)

DOSTOEVSKY:
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
(Penguin)

THE DEVILS
(Penguin)

THE GENTLE CREATURE, ETC.
(John Lehmann)

GOGOL:
TALES OF GOOD AND EVIL
(John Lehmann)

LESKOV:
THE ENCHANTED PILGRIM, ETC.
(Hutchinson)

THE AMAZON, ETC.
(Allen & Unwin)

OSTROVSKY:
EASY MONEY AND OTHER PLAYS
(Allen & Unwin)

SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

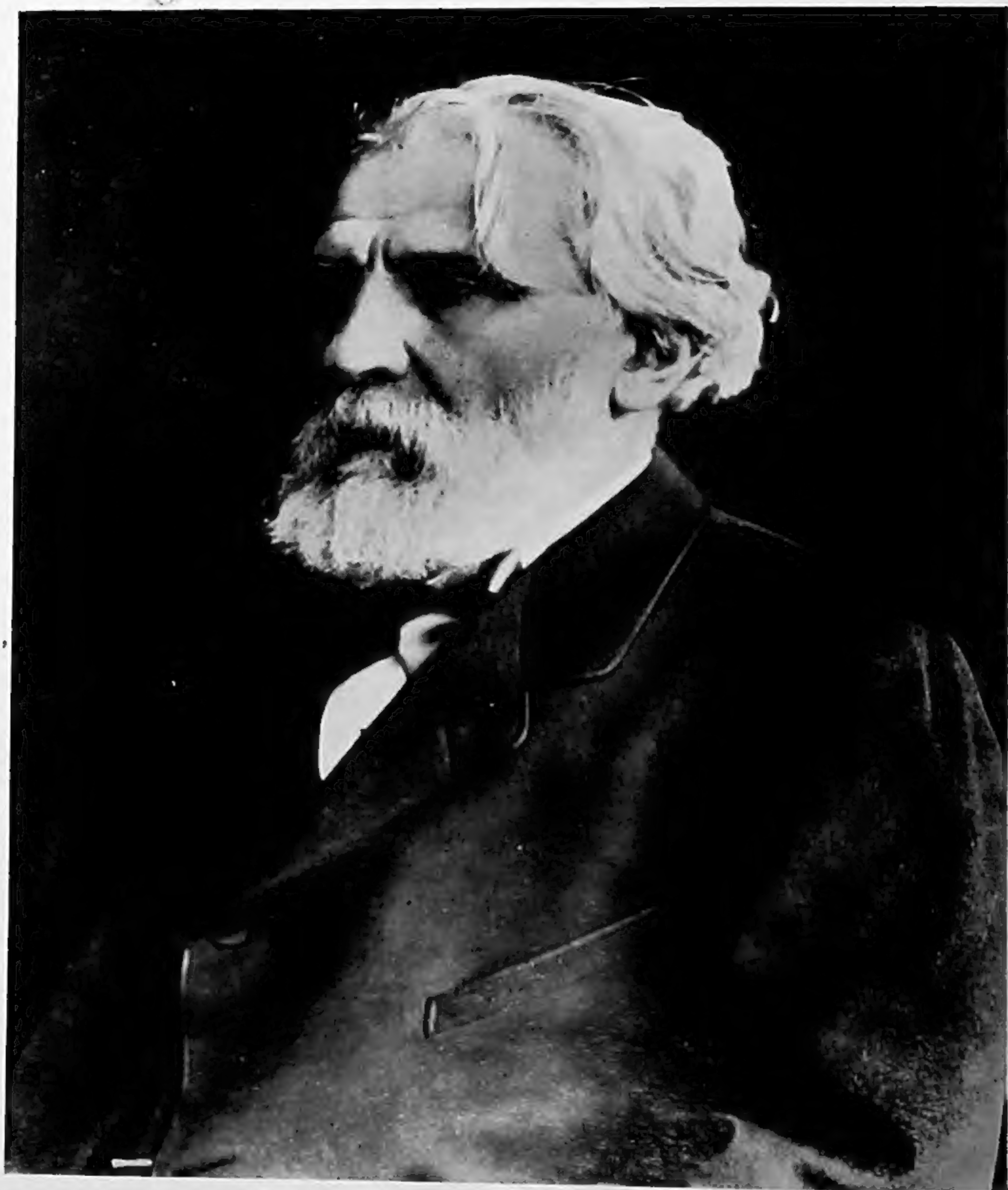
DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ **Book No.** _____

Acc. No. _____

This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]



Ivan Turgenev (1879)

TURGENEV

A LIFE

by

DAVID MAGARSHACK

FABER AND FABER LTD

24 Russell Square
London

*First published in mcmliv
by Faber and Faber Limited
24 Russell Square London W.C.1
Printed in Great Britain by
R. MacLehose and Company Limited
The University Press Glasgow
All rights reserved*

B 891.7

T 33 M

15188

Contents

PART ONE

Childhood	<i>page 11</i>
-----------	----------------

PART TWO

Adolescence: The Romantic Period	33
----------------------------------	----

PART THREE

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'	64
--	----

PART FOUR

Courtavenel: 'The Cradle of My Fame'	91
--------------------------------------	----

PART FIVE

The Russian Sphinx	125
--------------------	-----

PART SIX

The Crisis <i>critique</i>	163
----------------------------	-----

PART SEVEN

Three Momentous Years	187
-----------------------	-----

PART EIGHT

Baden-Baden	221
-------------	-----

PART NINE

Bougival	261
----------	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY	314
--------------	-----

INDEX	317
-------	-----

All the quotations in this book have been translated by the author. All the dates, unless otherwise stated, are in accordance with the New Style. The illustrations on pp. 90, 220 and 260 are reproduced by the courtesy of Professor André Mazon from his book *Manuscripts parisiens d'Ivan Tourguéneff*.

Illustrations

Ivan Turgenev (1879)	<i>frontispiece</i>
Varvara Petrovna, Turgenev's mother	<i>facing page 18</i>
Sergey Nikolayevich, Turgenev's father	18
View of Spasskoye village	19
Spasskoye mansion	19
Ivan Turgenev, aged 12	28
Ivan Turgenev, aged 21	28
Nikolai Stankevich	29
Michael Bakunin	29
Ivan Turgenev, aged 25	72
Visarion Belinsky	73
Alexander Herzen	73
Sketch by Turgenev: <i>The Business Executive</i>	<i>page 90</i>
Pauline Viardot	<i>facing page 110</i>
The 'Exile's Avenue', Spasskoye	111
The 'Exile's Cottage', Spasskoye	111
The <i>Contemporary</i> Circle: March 1856	152
Turgenev and his literary associates	152
Ivan Turgenev, aged 40	153
Title Page of <i>A Nobleman's Nest</i>	<i>page 220</i>
Ivan Turgenev, aged 44	<i>facing page 242</i>
Bougival: View of Turgenev's chalet	243
Sketch by Turgenev: <i>The Old Schoolmaster</i>	<i>page 260</i>
Count Leo Tolstoy, aged 57	<i>facing page 284</i>
Maria Savina	285

SRI PRATAP COLLEGE LIBRARY
SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ **Book No.** _____

Acc. No. _____

This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]

PART ONE

Childhood

1

Ivan Turgenev was born in Oryol on 28 October 1818 (O.S.). His mother, Vavara Petrovna, a most methodical and precise lady, left the following note of his birth in her diary: '*Aujourd'hui, 28 octobre, 1818, je suis accouchée d'un fils nommé Jean, à Orel, à midi. . . .*' The child, she added the further information, was 21 inches long (she did not give his weight) and was baptised on 4 November.

Five years earlier, Vavara Petrovna had inherited the vast possessions of her uncle Ivan Lutovinov. The Lutovinovs were not of very ancient stock. They could trace their ancestry only to the beginning of the eighteenth century. They had amassed their great wealth by brutal and unscrupulous means. In *Freeholder Ovsyanikov* Turgenev tells how his great-grand-father Ivan Lutovinov (the presumed grandfather of the narrator of the story) had robbed one of his neighbours, who belonged to the small class of freeborn peasant farmers, of a piece of land by simply riding up to it and declaring that it was his. When the farmer threatened to take him to court, he had him flogged till he promised to give up his claim to the land. Ivan Lutovinov left his property, consisting of twenty large and small estates in three different provinces, to his two sons, Peter and Ivan, but as Peter had died before the birth of his daughter Varvara, the Lutovinov estates, including the great Spasskoye mansion, passed to Ivan, a miserly bachelor with a passion for collecting pearls. He appears under the name of Vassily Luchinov in Turgenev's story *Three Portraits*, a characteristic Lutovinov family chronicle. The young girl Olga, whom Vassily

Childhood

seduces in the story, was his own sister. It was probably to atone for his sin of incest that many years later Ivan Lutovinov built a fine stone church in Spasskoye village and erected a mausoleum over the grave of his child, in which he, too, was later buried. His ghost, the peasants claimed, could be seen walking on the dam on one of the large ponds on the estate, bending down and looking for something on the ground, as they had often seen him doing in his lifetime. Turgenev, who must have heard the story of his uncle's ghost many times as a child, reproduced it in *Bezhin Meadow*, one of the finest stories in his *Diary of a Sportsman*.

Eight years after her husband's death, Yekaterina Ivanovna, Turgenev's grandmother, married a landowner by the name of Somov, who was a widower with several grown-up daughters of his own. Somov was not very different from the Lutovinovs. He was a confirmed drunkard and he beat and maltreated his little stepdaughter, a proud, stubborn and self-willed girl, who knew very well that she was the heiress to a great fortune. Yekaterina apparently did nothing to protect her daughter. She was not particularly fond of her (even as a child Varvara Petrovna was far from attractive) and had, besides, fallen entirely under the influence of her second husband. The sort of woman Yekaterina was can perhaps be best gathered from a story Turgenev told Ludwig Pietsch, a German artist and writer who became one of his closest friends in Baden-Baden: 'The quick-tempered old woman, who was stricken with paralysis,' Pietsch records Turgenev as saying, 'spent all her time sitting almost motionless in an armchair. One day she got very cross with the little serf boy who was in attendance on her, and in a fierce fit of anger seized a log and hit him over the head with such force that he fell unconscious on the floor. This sight produced a most unpleasant impression on her: she bent down, picked up the little boy, put him beside her on the large armchair, placed a pillow on his bleeding head and, sitting down on it, suffocated him.' The little boy was buried in secret and the whole thing was hushed up. (In his story *The Brigadier* Turgenev gives a somewhat different version of this incident.)

After the death of her mother, Varvara Petrovna was left entirely at the mercy of her drunken brute of a stepfather, whose own daughters were married by then. Many years later, after she had

Childhood

become the sole mistress of Spasskoye, she paid a visit to her stepfather's estate with Varvara Zhitov, a young girl of poor parents she had adopted. In her memoirs Varvara Zhitov tells how she and Varvara Petrovna walked through the rooms of the dilapidated country house and, after passing through the ballroom, found themselves in a passage opposite a boarded-up door, leading to Somov's private apartments. The young girl walked up to the door and was about to touch the ancient copper padlock protruding from behind the boards when a hysterical scream from Varvara Petrovna stopped her. 'Don't touch it,' Turgenev's mother cried. 'Those rooms are damned.'

She never forgot the cruelties and humiliations she had suffered at the hands of her stepfather. They burnt themselves into her mind and left a hideous scar there. As she grew up, her stepfather's attentions underwent a change and one winter night he tried to rape her. She escaped with the help of her old nurse and, lightly dressed, trudged for miles through the snow to her uncle's estate of Spasskoye. She was sixteen at the time, and the following ten years she spent at her uncle's large but inhospitable country house. Her education would scarcely have amounted to much had she not herself supplemented it by reading a great deal of French and a little of Russian, a language only used in speaking to her inferiors. 'She completely ignored Russian literature after Pushkin whom she only grudgingly acknowledged as a writer of merit,' Turgenev wrote about his mother. 'That is why, although she died in 1850, that is to say, when I had already been contributing for seven years to Russian periodicals, she never regarded me as a writer and never read a single story or article of mine, not even my *Diary of a Sportsman*.' Her life at Spasskoye was far from happy. Indeed, her uncle must have resented her proud and unbending spirit even more than her stepfather. At any rate, he threatened not only to throw her out of his house but also to disinherit her. And he would have carried out his threat and cheated her of her expectations had he not died suddenly of a heart attack before making his will.

Varvara Petrovna was twenty-six when at long last she entered into her inheritance and could fully satisfy her lust for power. A contemporary record describes her as a very plain woman, short and a little round-shouldered, with black hair and a pair of large and ruthless black eyes; her nose was long and broad, and her face was disfigured by large pores which made it look as though it were pockmarked; her bearing, according to the same authority, was proud, haughty and arrogant and her character revengeful, imperious and cruel. Everybody trembled before her look and everybody bowed down before her stubborn and unrelenting will. 'A typical representative of the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth centuries,' so Turgenev described her.

She ruled over her serfs with a rod of iron, treating them exactly as the Czar treated his own subjects. Indeed, she always referred to them as her 'subjects'. Turgenev left three full-length portraits of her in two of his stories, *Mumu* and *Punin and Baburin*, and in the small fragment of his first novel, which he published under the title of *Her Ladyship's Private Office*. In *Punin and Baburin*, Turgenev makes her use a phrase which he must have heard her use many times in life: 'Over my subjects', she declared, 'I rule as I like and I am not answerable for them to anyone.' She was so utterly convinced that she had a right to do anything she pleased with her serfs that any suggestion that they ought not to be flogged, or sent to Siberia, or pressed into the army merely aroused incredulous amazement in her. Her contempt for them was so great that she even extended it to the Greek Orthodox faith (Edmond de Goncourt reports Turgenev as complaining that at a dinner given by the Russian Ambassador in Paris in honour of the emancipation of the serfs he was placed forty-seventh at the table next to the Russian Orthodox priest: 'You must know,' Turgenev explained, 'that the priests in Russia are held in utter contempt by the gentry'); instead of the usual prayers, therefore, she had her adopted daughter read to her every day a chapter from a French translation of Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*.

Her numerous retinue of house serfs was divided into different

Childhood

classes and ranks just as at the Czar's court. Her butler was the 'Court Chamberlain' and was given the surname of the chief of the political police—Benkendorf; the fourteen-year-old boy who was in charge of the post was the 'postmaster-general', and her personal maids were 'ladies-in-waiting'. She never allowed her 'ladies-in-waiting' to marry. ('My wife', Turgenev makes the landowner in his story *Yermolay and the Miller's Wife* say, 'has made it a rule never to keep any married maids. And quite right, too, for they might have children, and how can a maid be expected to look after her mistress properly, make sure that her slightest whim is carried out, if she has all sorts of other things on her mind?'). One day she noticed that one of her maids was going to have a baby and she ordered one of her numerous spies to keep an eye on her. In due course the spy reported that the girl had disposed of her child by throwing it into one of the large ponds on the estate. She at once ordered the pond to be dragged, and in addition to the body of the newborn baby, a large number of skeletons of other newborn babies were caught in the net.

In her dealings with her servants a most strict etiquette was observed. She herself was rarely to be seen, and no servant was permitted to address her on pain of severe punishment. When one of her 'ministers' came in with his 'report', he usually stood waiting obsequiously at the door until his mistress deigned to notice his presence. If after the lapse of a couple of minutes she still did not appear to be aware of him, it meant that she was too busy and the 'minister' retired quietly.

She had a special messenger ride every day to the nearest town of Mtsensk for the post. His arrival with the letters was heralded by the ringing of a big bell, after which the 'postmen' ran along the corridors of the vast mansion ringing little handbells, and the 'postmaster-general', dressed in suitable livery, took the letters to her room. But even then a strict ceremonial was observed. She was of a highly nervous disposition and the fall of a pair of scissors on the floor threw her into such agitation that her house doctor had to give her smelling salts to calm her. The 'Court Chamberlain' therefore looked through the post first to make sure there was no letter with a black seal on it. Then a serf flautist (she had an orchestra of serf musicians as well as a company of serf actors) played a gay or a sad

Childhood

tune to let her know what to expect from the letter handed to her on a silver salver by the 'Court Chamberlain'.

Her private office was got up as a court of law. It had a dais behind which hung her portrait and on which she sat on a high chair, rattling her beads ominously (she wore a rosary for the sole purpose of rattling it and so striking fear into people), and dealing out rough justice to those of her 'subjects' who often quite unwittingly had transgressed against her orders: a maid who did not offer her a cup of tea in the proper way was sent off to some remote village and perhaps separated from her family for ever; gardeners who failed to prevent the plucking of a tulip in one of the flower beds before the house were ordered to be flogged; a servant whom she suspected of a mutinous disposition was sent off to Siberia. Many years after her death Turgenev recalled being present when two young serfs were sent to Siberia by his mother for failing to bow to her with due humility. He was only six at the time. 'My mother,' Turgenev, who had made use of a similar incident in *Punin and Baburin*, told a friend who was visiting him in Spasskoye, 'was sitting here at this window; it was summer and the window was open, and I was in the room when the two lads who were being sent to Siberia walked up bareheaded to the window for my mother's inspection.'

Sometimes she would pretend to be dying. Whenever that happened another strict ceremonial was observed: a small table was placed at the bedside with a cushion on it: she put her hand on the cushion and her favourites and servants walked up to the bed to kiss her hand: one servant who was quickwitted enough to cross himself before bending down to kiss her hand was duly rewarded by her. Pavel Annenkov, Turgenev's close friend and literary executor, summed up her character in one sentence. 'No one', he wrote, 'could equal her in the art of insulting a man, humiliating him and making him unhappy while preserving the utmost decorum, remaining absolutely calm and keeping her dignity.'

Turgenev's friends were often perplexed and irritated by what they regarded as his incomprehensible weakness of character. Flaubert, annoyed by Turgenev's failure to keep an appointment or by the constant postponements of Turgenev's visits to his country house at Croisset, called him *une poire molle, un vieux*

Childhood

chiffon—a soft pear, an old rag. Vassily Botkin, one of Turgenev's closest friends and literary advisers, was fond of telling the amusing story of how Turgenev was late at a dinner to which he had been invited by one of his country neighbours because his valet and coachman stopped the carriage to have a game of cards while their master was too weak to tell them to drive on. It was his mother's insensate lust for power that made him loath to impose his will upon his fellow creatures, even if they were his own serfs. 'I was not born to command', he confessed to an intimate friend. Yet while his own will was thoroughly crushed by the overpowering will of his mother, this apparent lack of character never went further than his private life. Where his convictions were concerned, he never yielded an inch of ground. 'I am not a coward,' he wrote to Alexander Herzen on 16 October 1862, 'and I hate to prevaricate either to myself or to others.' And six years earlier he put it even more trenchantly in a letter to Sergey Aksakov, author of *A Family Chronicle*. 'Although', he wrote, 'I belong to the category of people who are described as "rags", you must remember that a rag, too, can be obstinate: it is easy to tear it, but you will achieve nothing by hitting it with a hammer.'

3

Three years after Varvara Petrovna had entered into her inheritance, Sergey Turgenev, a young cavalry officer, paid a visit to Spasskoye on official business—he had been detailed to buy horses for his battalion. He was the son of a neighbour whose small estate of 130 serfs was situated only a few miles from Spasskoye. He was twenty-three and she was twenty-nine, an old maid according to the ideas of the time. She is said to have fallen in love with the handsome young officer at first sight; it is more likely, however, that knowing the reduced circumstances of his father and fully aware, too, that he belonged to one of the oldest families in Russia, she made up her mind that he was the right husband for her; it would seem, at any rate, that like a true matriarch she did not hesitate to make her intentions known to him. But he was apparently too repelled by her looks for her wealth to make any impression on him, and his father is said to have had to go down on his knees

Childhood

before him and beg him to save their family estate of Turgenevo from being sold by public auction, before he agreed to marry her.

The Turgenev family derived its origin from a Tartar prince, Khan Turga, who in the fifteenth century left the Golden Horde, became baptised and served under Prince Vassily the Blind. The Turgenev crest showed a golden star on an azure field with a silver crescent above it and a bared sword with a golden hilt underneath, to signify its Tartar origin and former Mohammedan faith as well as its true and faithful service to the princes and emperors of Russia. One of them, Peter Turgenev, had been beheaded by 'false' Demetrius, the pretender to the Russian throne, in 1606. Another, Timofey Turgenev, was besieged by the peasant rebel Stenka Razin at Tsarytsin (now Stalingrad) in 1670 and then dragged by Vasska Moustache, one of Stenka Razin's lieutenants, by a rope to the Volga and drowned. (In *Phantoms* Turgenev recalls the taking of Tsarytsin by the rebels in a short scene.) A third perished in fighting for Catherine the Great against the other peasant rebel Pugachov. Turgenev's great-grandfather Alexey served as a page at the court of Empress Anne and aroused the jealousy of her favourite Biron, who packed him off to the front (Russia was at war with Turkey at the time). He was taken prisoner by the Turks and ended up in the Sultan's harem, where he had to serve coffee to the Sultan and light his pipe. His good looks (all the Turgenevs seem to have been handsome men) captivated the Sultan's favourite wife who gave him a purse with money and helped him to escape. While engaged in the service of the Czar, the Turgenevs seem to have neglected their own affairs so that by the beginning of the nineteenth century the main branch of the family was faced with bankruptcy. (Not all the Turgenevs, however, were as improvident as that. In a letter to Herzen in January 1861, Turgenev refers to a certain Fyodor Turgenev as 'the biggest son-of-a-bitch and robber. I well remember', he goes on, 'that we did not visit him because of that, although he was a relative of ours. And yet my own relatives [i.e. the Lutovinovs] were far from irreproachable.')

The marriage between Sergey Turgenev and Varvara Lutovinov took place on Friday, 14 January 1816 (O.S.). It did not turn out a very happy one for Varvara Petrovna, for her husband never concealed the fact that he disliked her intensely. Barred from taking



Varvara Petrovna, Turgenev's mother



Sergey Nikolayevich, Turgenev's father



View of Spasskoye Village



Spasskoye Mansion

Childhood

an active part in the running of the Lutovinov estates, he devoted himself entirely to the one absorbing passion of his life—women. Turgenev described him as ‘a mighty hunter in the face of the Lord’. Women, indeed, found him irresistible and his conquests did not seem to cost him much effort. A few years before his death, Turgenev drew up a careful plan for a novel, one of the characters of which was a pretty young girl by the name of Selina who ‘according to rumours’, Turgenev wrote, ‘was the natural daughter of a Russian army officer.’ Turgenev then added this characteristic note: ‘The author who knows everything told us that Selina’s father was his own father, Colonel Sergey Nikolayevich Turgenev, who spent some time in Paris in 1822 *et qu’on tenait pour un Don Juan connu*’ (and who was reputed to be a well known Don Juan).

The date in this note is of some interest. For in 1822 the whole Turgenev family, father, mother and their three sons (Turgenev was their second son, his elder brother Nicholas being born in 1816 and his younger brother Sergey in 1821), went for a tour of Europe, visiting Germany, France and Switzerland. They travelled in great state with a numerous retinue of servants and a young Russian doctor. In Berne the four-year-old Turgenev nearly fell into the famous bear pit and was saved by his father who got hold of him just in the nick of time. He then fell dangerously ill and for several days his life hung in the balance.

4

Turgenev’s father was usually very cold and unapproachable, but whenever he wanted to create a good impression something irresistibly charming appeared in his face and manners. This was especially so with the women he liked. He was very superstitious. He was afraid of ‘house demons’ and frequently ran to fetch the local priest to exorcise them by sprinkling the rooms of their country house with holy water. One of Turgenev’s earliest recollections was of the flickering light of the candles during one of these ceremonies, which seemed to have struck a superstitious fear into him, too, a fear he could never rid himself of. These dark fears were strengthened by his close association with the house serfs and the peasants on the estate. In *Bezhin Meadow* he recounts some of

Childhood

these superstitions and, characteristically, ends his story by 'regretfully' admitting that the boy who had heard the voice of another boy, who had been drowned the year before, calling to him from the river, died the same year though not by drowning, but by a fall from a horse. This may partly explain the dark fears that haunted him more and more persistently as he grew older and that found expression in some of his supernatural stories.

Turgenev's attitude to his father was a curious one. He liked to talk about his childhood, but the stories he told his friends concerned mainly his mother, to whom he appeared to be violently attached in spite of the horror she inspired in him. In *First Love*, which he claimed to be the most autobiographical of all his stories, he gives a very striking description of his relations with his father. 'My father', he writes, 'had a strange influence on me—and strange indeed were our relations towards one another. He took practically no part in my education, but he never insulted me; he respected my freedom, he even was, if I may put it like that, polite to me, but—he never let me come near him. I loved him and I admired him. He seemed to me a paragon of a man—and, dear me, how passionately I should have grown attached to him if only I had not constantly felt his restraining hand! But whenever he wanted to he could arouse in me an absolute trust in him almost instantaneously, by one single movement, as it were. My heart opened up to him and I chatted to him as I would to an intelligent friend or an indulgent teacher; then he would desert me with the same suddenness, and his hand would push me away again—gently and tenderly, but it did push me away for all that. Occasionally,' Turgenev goes on, 'a gay mood would come upon him, and then he would be ready to play with me as though he were a little boy himself (he was fond of all strong physical movements): once—only once!—he fondled me with such tenderness that I nearly burst into tears . . . but his gaiety and tenderness vanished without a trace, and what had taken place between us gave me no hope for the future; it was as though it had all been happening in a dream. Sometimes as I gazed at his handsome and intelligent face my heart would leap up and all my being would rush towards him. He seemed to feel what was happening inside me, and he would give me a casual pat on the cheek and go away, or he would suddenly turn cold as only he knew how to turn

Childhood

cold, and I would shrink back into myself at once and go cold, too. His friendly moods were never caused by my mute but unmistakable entreaties; they always came quite unexpectedly. When I used to reflect on my father's character afterwards, I could not help feeling that he could not be bothered with me—or with his family; his desires were elsewhere and he derived full enjoyment from them. "Grab all you can, but never allow yourself to be caught; to belong to yourself alone is the whole 'trick' of living," he said to me once. Another time, like a young democrat, I began discussing freedom in his presence (that day he was, as I called it, "good", and it was possible to talk to him about everything). "Freedom", he repeated. "Do you know what can give a man freedom?" "What?" "His will—his own will, that will give him power which is better than freedom. Know how to want something, and you will be free and you will be able to command." My father, Turgenev concludes, 'wanted to live above everything else and more than anything else: perhaps he had a premonition that he was not going to enjoy the "trick" of living long: he died when he was forty-two.'

In this estimate of his father's character Turgenev overlooked the influence his mother's devouring lust for power had on it. Having been brushed aside by her almost insane possessiveness from taking an active part even in the life of his children, he could not but behave as he did. Everything belonged to her—everything except himself, and it was this that made her life, as Turgenev puts it in *Mumu*, so 'cheerless and hideous' and turned the life of her children, too, into a nightmare.

'There is nothing I can remember my childhood by,' Turgenev told a friend. 'I have not a single happy memory of it. Stern discipline was the order of the day in our house. I used to be birched almost daily for all sorts of trifles. One day one of my mother's companions, an old woman, seemed to have caught me doing something—what it was I do not know to this day—and told my mother about it. Without a word of explanation my mother began to thrash me. She thrashed me herself with her own hands, and in reply to my entreaties to tell me why I was being punished, kept saying, "You know very well why I am thrashing you!"' When on the following morning the little boy was still at a loss to know what terrible crime he had committed, the punishment was re-

Childhood

peated, his mother threatening to go on thrashing him till he confessed. (There was a strong sadistic streak in her character: once when thrashing her eldest boy she nearly fainted with excitement, and little Nicholas, forgetting his punishment, bawled at the top of his voice: 'Water! Water for mummy!') 'I was so terrified,' Turgenev went on, 'that I decided to run away. I got out of bed in the middle of the night, when everyone in the house was asleep, dressed myself quietly and, picking up the small bundle of food and clothing I had prepared beforehand, began groping my way in the dark to the entrance hall. I did not know myself where I was going to run away to—all I knew was that I had to run away somewhere where they would never find me. I crept along the passage like a thief, trying not to breathe, though I was shaking all over. Suddenly a lighted candle appeared at the end of the passage and to my horror I saw someone approaching me. It was my German tutor. He took me by the hand and led me into the nursery where he started questioning me, talked nicely to me, trying to convince me of the utter foolishness of my action. Next morning he went to see my mother and stayed in her room a long time, and though I never found out what they had been talking about, I was not thrashed so often after that day.'

Turgenev was very fond of relating this story of his early childhood, and it has been preserved in a number of versions. One of his closest friends, the poet Jacob Polonsky, to whom he told it a few years before his death, asked him whether his father had ever tried to intercede for him. 'Never,' replied Turgenev. 'Father thought that if I was being punished, I must have deserved it.'

But it would seem more likely that his father never dared to interfere with his wife's treatment of their children even if he thought they did not deserve their punishment. At any rate, he acted very promptly when one of their German tutors tried to emulate her example. Hearing Nicholas's screams in the nursery, he rushed in and threw the German tutor down two flights of stairs.

5

Already as a child Turgenev showed a propensity for making rash statements. He was only seven when the poet Ivan Dmitriyev paid

Childhood

a visit to Spasskoye. His mother, anxious to show what a clever little boy he was (Turgenev was her favourite son), asked him to recite one of the poet's fables, which he did. He was unwise, however, to add a bit of literary criticism of his own. 'Your fables', he addressed Dmitriyev, 'are not bad, but Ivan Krylov's fables are better.' His mother was so angry that after the poet's departure she gave him a good thrashing, 'to which, I suppose,' Turgenev commented in telling this story, 'I must ascribe the fact that I still remember my first encounter with a Russian author.' He was no less outspoken with Princess Kutuzov, the wife of the hero of the Napoleonic wars, who paid a visit to Spasskoye the same year. The boy was struck by her unusual appearance: she looked like an ancient icon that had grown dark and warped with age. 'You look like a monkey,' the boy said to her in a loud and firm voice, a remark that horrified his mother and brought its inevitable retribution.

Even at the age of five Turgenev impressed people as being different from other children. He was rather small, which was astonishing when one considers into what a giant of a man he grew later, but he had a huge head and his large blue eyes were unusually thoughtful for so young a child. What amazed everybody, however, was the insatiable curiosity he showed in everything around him. He could sit for hours observing a branch of a tree or the leg of a horse, and he used to disconcert people by the way he concentrated his entire attention on something that struck him as peculiar about them. It was as though without knowing it he was storing up hundreds of impressions in his memory, and this idiosyncrasy of his he kept to the end of his days. 'You know,' a character in one of his comedies, undoubtedly modelled on himself, observes: 'even in the most glorious moments of my life I am not able to refrain from observing things.' And in his story *Assya* he is even more outspoken. 'It amused me,' he writes, 'to observe people—and I did not really observe them, either—I scrutinised them with a sort of joyful and insatiable curiosity.' In his *Journey to the Woodlands* he actually gives an illustration of this peculiarity of his which lends such vitality to the descriptive passages in his works.

'I raised my head,' he writes, 'and saw at the very end of a thin branch one of those large flies with an emerald head which the French so coquettishly call "virgins," but which our simple-

Childhood

mindful peasants call "bucket-yokes". For a long time, for over an hour, I did not remove my eyes from it. Baked through and through by the sun, it did not move, and only from time to time did it turn its head from side to side and flutter its wings—that was all. . . ' And yet looking at the fly with that concentrated attention of his, Turgenev felt that he had understood nature's 'clear and unmistakable, though to many people still mysterious, meaning'. This Turgenev defines as 'a slow and quiet animation, a leisureliness and restraint of feelings and forces, an equilibrium in the state of health of every individual creature—that', he concludes the lesson taught him by the fly, 'is nature's very foundation, its unalterable law—that is what maintains it and keeps it going.'

In his childhood, too, according to an account left by Edmond de Goncourt, Turgenev used to spend many hours lying on the grass communing with nature, 'delicious hours', he called them, *des savoureuses heures*, when the faintest 'noises of the earth' reached his ears, and when his whole being overflowed with feelings he could not put into words. Another memory from his childhood at the age of nine or ten he put into Lezhnev's mouth in *Rudin*: 'In those Moscow days,' Turgenev wrote, 'I used to go to a rendezvous with—who do you think?—a young lime tree at the end of my garden. I would embrace its thin and slender trunk, and it seemed to me as though I were embracing all nature, and my heart would expand and be deeply moved as though nature had in truth filled it to overflowing.'

6

His overpowering feeling for nature Turgenev imbibed as a young child when left to himself to roam about the huge park which surrounded the Spasskoye mansion on all sides. For the fact that he was left alone, he had to thank the constant disagreements that flared up with such regularity between his parents because of his father's numerous love affairs. Varvara Petrovna was too busy keeping an eye on her husband, too harassed by the agonizing thought that the man she had bought should escape her possessive grasp, to worry what her *Vanichka* was doing during the hours he was free from his French and German lessons. He spent the happi-

Childhood

est days of his childhood in the park, which covered over thirty acres, with its lime tree avenues, its huge oaks, its old pines and larches, and its secret places known only to himself. In this park, of which he left many descriptions in his stories, particularly in *Faust*, he wrote to Pauline Viardot from Spasskoye on 26 June 1868, he used to lie as a little boy among the strawberry beds to steal strawberries. 'There', he went on, 'is the tree where I shot my first crow: there is the place where I found that enormous mushroom; where I watched the fight between a grass-snake and a toad, a fight,' he told Pauline, 'that for the first time made me doubt the existence of a merciful Providence.' It was in this park too, that he listened for hours to the songs of blackbirds, chaffinches, yellowhammers, siskins, orioles, nightingales and other birds, learning to recognise each by its song.

He was particularly fond of the lime-tree avenues and the sweet smell of lime flowers always filled him with nostalgia for his homeland. During his 'house arrest' in Spasskoye in 1852, he himself planted a large avenue of lime-trees which became known as 'The Exile's Avenue'. Bored with his life in Vichy, where he had gone for a cure in the summer of 1859, he wrote to a friend that the only good things he could find there were the few lime tree avenues which were just then in flower. 'Their sweet smell', he wrote, 'reminds me of my country, but I don't find her vast fields here, nor the wormwood growing along their boundaries, nor the ponds bordered by willow trees, etc.' In many of his stories lime trees are singled out for special attention. 'The lime trees smell so sweetly,' says Natalya Petrovna in *A Month in the Country*, 'all the time we walked beneath the lime-trees.' He had other favourite trees, particularly 'The Two Brothers', a huge twin pine, under which he was fond of sitting whenever he returned to Spasskoye and on whose bark his friends were expected to carve their initials.

A still more important consequence of Turgenev's comparative freedom as a child was his close association with the numerous servants in the house, the gamekeepers, the gardeners and the peasants in the village. It was from them that he learnt his Russian. 'The speech of the Russian peasant', he wrote, 'is remarkably simple and clear,' just like his own prose, in fact. He also learnt how they lived, and their hard life and the incessant beatings and humiliations to

Childhood

which they were almost daily subjected, awakened in him a deep sympathy for them as human beings. As a little boy he would go with their children to feed the pigeons or the crows or the fish in the pond. As he grew older the gamekeepers and huntsmen taught him all they knew about woodcock and partridge, capercailie and snipe, wild duck and corncrake, and showed him their nests and explained their habits to him. He himself was taught to shoot by an old forest keeper, first at a sitting bird and then at a bird in flight. He acquired his passion for shooting game birds as a child and it became the greatest passion of his life. Sitting in the park during one of his last visits to Spasskoye, almost incapacitated by an attack of gout, he asked his servant to fetch his shotgun and flush a crow in his direction. But he missed it. 'Before,' he murmured sadly, 'I used to hit a woodcock on the wing and now I can't even hit a crow—it seems it's time I was dead.'

Turgenev was taught to read and write Russian by his father's valet, Fyodor Lobanov, whom many years later he employed on all sorts of confidential jobs. His thirst for reading was prodigious and already as a boy of eight he began writing poetry. He left a detailed description of his first adventures in Russian literature in a letter to a friend. 'We had a huge house in the country (it is burnt down now),' Turgenev wrote on 18 September 1840. 'To us children it seemed a whole town at the time. In one of the rooms in our part of the house there were dusty book-cases of home manufacture, painted black and with glass doors. Piles of books in dark-brown covers, published in the seventies of the last century, lay on the shelves—upside down, sideways, one on top of another, tied with bits of string, covered with dust and smelling of mice. I was eight or nine then. I arranged with one of our servants, a young fellow, a versifier like myself, to rummage through the locked book-cases. We stole into that room at night and broke open the lock of one of the book-cases. I stood on Leon's shoulders and with hands bleeding from the scratches I had received took out two large volumes: one of them I took at once to my room and the other I hid under the stairs and waited with a beating heart for the morning. To my share fell an enormous volume—*The Book of Emblems* etc., an edition published in 1780, with six drawings of emblems on each page and their explanations in four languages on the opposite leaf [Turgenev

Childhood

described this book in greater detail in *A Nobleman's Nest*. Mr. Serebryakov (he ran away afterwards and is now distinguishing himself in the Caucasus) got Kheraskov's *Rossiade* [an eighteenth-century epic describing the capture of Kazan by Ivan the Terrible] Oh, *Rossiade*! and oh, Kheraskov! what delight I owe you! Leon and I used to go off into the park every day and there in the summerhouse on the bank of the pond we read it—and how we read it! or rather he read it—and how he read it! First he would read through each verse very fast without any expression—a rough copy, as it were; then he would repeat it with the proper emphasis, intensity and feeling—a clean copy, as it were. It was a bit highflown—but very pleasant. I listened—no! I drank it in—no! I was all ears—no! let me put it in a more classical way: I devoured it—no! I swallowed it—still no! I choked—yes, that's it! Leon was a polite fellow and he offered me the book, but I refused. I could read very fast, no worse than he, but I could never hope to achieve the solemnity of his ejaculations. Besides, he spoke with a nasal twang which at the time, and especially at the enunciation of the letter o, I liked very much.' (The whole of this incident Turgenev incorporated thirty years later in *Punin and Baburin*.)

7

In October 1827 the Turgenev family settled in their own house in Moscow. The move from the country to the capital seems to have been made chiefly for the sake of the two elder boys. The frequent changes of German and French tutors made it impossible for them to get a proper education and it was decided to place them in a preparatory school in Moscow run by a German by the name of Weydenhammer. Turgenev spent the next sixteen months there, going back to the country during the summer holidays. In his story *Jacob Pasyнков*, published twenty-eight years later, Turgenev recalled some of his experiences at his prep school. He described himself as being at the time 'a spoilt and conceited boy' who was in the habit of 'telling lies'. It is quite true, of course, that something of the arrogance of his class clung to him for quite a long time (it is doubtful whether he ever really quite got rid of it). Nor is it surprising that with a domineering mother like Varvara Petrovna he

Childhood

should have taken to telling lies. It was Nicholas Stankevich who many years later made him ashamed of his 'mendacity'.

Already at that early age Turgenev got thoroughly soaked in German idealism. The influence of the Russian Hegelians, a small group or 'circle' of idealistic Moscow students, headed by Stankevich, Michael (Michel) Bakunin and the critic Vissarion Belinsky, seems to have penetrated even to Weydenhammer's prep school and it is perhaps not surprising that a poor scholar of that establishment who was much older than Turgenev should have been reading Schiller's *Resignation*, a poem the young Hegelians were very fond of quoting. Turgenev greatly admired the older boy who talked in hushed tones of 'goodness', 'truth', 'life' and 'love', and who read poetry to him on their walks.

But life at the prep school had its prosaic side, too. It was there that Turgenev first showed those hypochondriac tendencies which plagued him throughout his life. He had imagined that the top of his head was only covered by skin and hair and he had a morbid fear of touching it. (At his post-mortem it was revealed that the bones of his skull were so thin that they gave at the slightest pressure.) A mere touch with a finger would send him nearly into a faint. The boys at the school of course soon discovered this and would insist on pressing his skull, causing him unbearable agonies.

It was at Weydenhammer's that Turgenev fell under the spell of what he many years later defined as the 'pseudo-sublime' school of Russian literature, which flourished between 1830 and 1840 and which included the novelist and playwright Mikhail Zagoskin and the poet Vladimir Benedictov, a starlet in the Russian poetic firmament which for a time eclipsed the great star of Pushkin. (In an address delivered to a small gathering in 1859, Turgenev pointed out that the works of the writers of this school were full of 'swaggering self-confidence' and dedicated to 'the glorification of Russia at all costs', but had very little Russian about them. 'It was,' he declared, 'a vast façade haphazardly erected by patriots who knew nothing about their own country.') Zagoskin's famous historical novel *Yury Miloslavsky* had been published just then, and Turgenev's Russian master used to read extracts from it to his pupils in the evenings. 'It is impossible to describe the absorbed interest



Ivan Turgenev, aged 12



Ivan Turgenev, aged 21



Nikolai Stankevich



Michael Bakunin

Childhood

with which we listened to Zagoskin's novel,' Turgenev wrote twenty-five years later to Sergey Aksakov. 'One evening I jumped up from my seat and hurled myself on a boy who was talking during the reading.' The strange thing, however, was that while *Yury Miloslavsky* seemed 'a miracle of perfection' to Turgenev, he did not feel inclined to hero-worship its author, who was a great friend of his father's and whom he frequently saw at their house. 'Zagoskin was too goodnatured,' Turgenev wrote, 'and would sometimes argue with me like an equal, and a young boy as I then was cannot worship a man who puts himself on the same footing with him.' Besides, Zagoskin had rather an odd figure and everything in him struck Turgenev as essentially clumsy, eccentric and amusing. He had three other highly comic weaknesses. 'He imagined himself,' Turgenev wrote in his reminiscences, 'to be extraordinarily strong, he was convinced that no woman could resist him, and, finally (and this was particularly amazing in a rabid patriot like him), he had an unhappy weakness for the French language which he mangled mercilessly, mixing up the numbers and genders incessantly, so that in our house he was even nicknamed *Monsieur l'article*.'

In the autumn of 1829 Turgenev and his brother Nicholas were transferred to the Lazarevsky Institute of Moscow (a kind of select secondary school) where he began to study English, but he only stayed there till 1 November. It had apparently been decided by his parents that intensive private coaching was the only way of getting him into Moscow University where the entrance examination had been considerably stiffened. A letter he wrote to his favourite uncle Nicholas, his father's brother, who was to become the manager of his estates, affords a glimpse into his life at this period of intensive preparation for the university. It was written between 31 March and 2 April 1831 (O.S.), when Turgenev was eleven and half years old. He had lessons both in the mornings and in the afternoons and spent the rest of the day doing his homework. On 31 March, for instance, he had lessons in French composition and algebra in the morning, his French tutor setting him an essay on *L'homme vain* and the end of one of Mirabeau's speeches, which he found even better than the beginning. 'Reading that speech,' the young 'democrat' wrote, 'I was so entranced that I find it impossible

Childhood

to describe it.' After his lesson in the afternoon he and his tutor discussed philosophy, 'and', he tells his uncle, 'more than that, we plunged right into the deepest profundities, etc. etc.' But in between the lessons there was still some time left for fun and games even for so uncommonly serious-minded a boy as Turgenev. On 1 April he indulged in all the usual April Fool's day amusements, fooling his brothers and tutors and being fooled by them in turn. His letter includes a fragment of a poem he was just then composing and it ends with a description of the ice-floes on the river 'which hundreds of people gather to watch', and a quotation from a poem descriptive of that scene.

8

This letter to his uncle is typical of a somewhat precocious and priggish child; but an event was soon to occur which was to change the child into an adolescent. At the age of barely thirteen Turgenev was to experience his first violent infatuation and gain a rather frightening view of what real love was like. He described it all in *First Love*, a story, he told a correspondent, which was not invented but given to him entirely by life. Even the incident of the knife with which he had got ready to stab his rival before he discovered that it was his own father, he assured another correspondent, had actually taken place. He wrote the story in 1860, and by that time he had already perfected his method of drawing up a preliminary list of characters and a detailed 'history' of each of them. The list is headed by the following three characters:

I, a boy of 15 (13) years,
My father—38 years,
My mother—(36) 40 years. . . .

In the story itself Turgenev gives his age as 16, and not as 13 (his actual age at the time the incident took place) nor 15, no doubt to add artistic verisimilitude to the dramatic conflict between father and son. But it is clear from the original figures and from his father's age that the events described in the story must have taken place in 1831, when Turgenev was almost thirteen, his father thirty-eight and his mother forty-four and not forty.

One incident in the story (it occurs towards the end) is rather

Childhood

interesting as it seems to explain a peculiarity of Turgenev's character which he himself regarded as odd. It happened during the last meeting between his father and Zinaida, the twenty-year-old girl with whom both father and son were in love. Turgenev had watched the scene from a distance, unobserved by either of them. His father and Zinaida were apparently quarrelling about something. He saw the girl stretch out her hand, and heard her say in French: 'You must leave that woman. . . .' Then to his utter dismay he saw his father raise his crop and hit her across the hand, leaving a red weal on it. Zinaida looked silently at his father, then she slowly put her hand to her lips and kissed the red weal. 'Father', Turgenev continues, 'flung down his crop and, hurriedly mounting the front steps, rushed into the house. Zinaida turned round and, with arms outstretched and head thrown back, left the window. . . . I felt', Turgenev continues, 'that however long I lived I should never be able to forget Zinaida's movement, look and smile. . . . This is love,' he told himself later as he sat before his writing desk at night, 'this is passion! How is it possible not to be resentful, how is it possible to suffer a blow from any—from the dearest hand? But it seems it is possible if you are in love. . . . And I—I imagined. . . .'

At the time when Turgenev wrote this he, too, had had to suffer many cruel blows from the woman he loved, and this no doubt accounts for the poignancy of his description of the scene; but the blow from the crop across Zinaida's 'beautiful' hand had burnt itself into his mind and may explain his curious obsession with women's hands. 'I must tell you about an odd peculiarity of mine,' he wrote to Countess Lambert with whom he had conducted an *amitié amoureuse* for many years. 'I kiss the hands of only those women whom I deeply respect and love.' A year later he wrote to her: 'When I kiss a woman's hand I want it to make me feel that it knows the pleasure it gives me to kiss it.' This strange obsession with hands went further: a woman with unattractive hands positively repelled him. Tolstoy's sister Maria, he wrote to Countess Lambert, was a very charming woman, but, unfortunately, she did not have beautiful hands, and 'to me,' he added, 'it is, if not everything, then almost everything.'

The strange love of a boy of thirteen for his father's young

mistress had, as Turgenev himself expressed it, 'aged' him, and compared with Zinaida's love for his father, his own love for her with all its excitements and sufferings, seemed childish, paltry and insignificant.

Another event that occurred that year was also destined to leave a lasting impression on Turgenev. In September 1831 Asiatic cholera made its first appearance in European Russia and from there spread all across Western Europe. The dread epidemic created panic in Moscow. 'Everything trembled before the terrible scourge which was moving along the Volga towards Moscow,' Herzen writes in his memoirs. 'It struck a capricious course, stopping, missing certain places, apparently by-passing Moscow and then, suddenly the terrible news—"Cholera in Moscow"—spread like wildfire through the city. . . .' 'Moscow' Herzen continues, 'assumed quite a different aspect. There were fewer carriages in the streets; gloomy crowds stood at the crossroads talking of poisoners; carriages, conveying the sick to the hospitals, moved slowly through the streets, accompanied by policemen; people shied away from the black hearses with the bodies of the dead. Bulletins about the epidemic were issued twice a day. The city was cordoned off by troops, as in time of war, and the soldiers shot some poor devil of a church deacon who was making his way across the river. All this absorbed the thoughts of the citizens to the exclusion of everything else; the fear of the epidemic robbed them of their fear of the authorities, and they began to grumble, and almost every hour the news was spread of someone falling ill and someone dying. . . .'

It is not difficult to imagine the sheer horror with which so impressionable a boy as Turgenev reacted to the cholera epidemic, particularly as at the time he lived at home with such a highly-strung, unpredictable and fantastic woman as his mother. Varvara Petrovna's remedy against the epidemic was indeed fantastic. She had had made a special sedan chair with glass sides and a sloping wooden top, in which she was carried in the streets by specially selected serfs and for which she was nicknamed the 'Virgin Mary' by the servants in the house. All through his life Turgenev suffered from a dread of cholera which he could not master. The slightest rumour of a cholera epidemic sent him scurrying out of the threatened district and sometimes out of Russia.

PART TWO

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

2

Looking back at the age of forty on the ten years between 1833 and 1843, Turgenev described them as 'confused, strange and self-conceited'. Those were the years when he entered upon his literary career as a writer of turgid romantic verse and 'philosophic' poetic dramas, when he was an admirer of the Russian 'pseudo-sublime school' of writers and an imitator of Byron. Hardly any of his writings of that period have been preserved, but they were all characterised by an utter divorce from life and reality. Those were also the years of intense study at the universities of Moscow, Petersburg and Berlin, of his travels in Italy and Switzerland, and of his friendships with Stankevich and Bakunin. They were his *Lehrjahre*, years when his genius seemed to be blundering towards self-realisation and only succeeding in getting itself into one blind alley after another. That he finally burst out of the romantic cocoon he had woven round himself was due entirely to his direct contact with life and to his ability to transmute his experience of it into art.

He entered Moscow University in 1833 at the age of fifteen, but only stayed one term there. He was perhaps too young to be interested in the Moscow student 'circles' or meet their leaders—Stankevich and Herzen. One incident, however, does provide a link between him and the Moscow Hegelians. It concerns the suicide of a young girl who was in love with a member of Stankevich's circle. Stankevich wrote a poem in her memory, and thirty-six years later Turgenev made her the heroine of his story *The Unhappy Girl* in which he quoted four lines from Stankevich's poem. It would

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

appear from a letter Turgenev wrote to the poet Polonsky on 27 February 1869 (O.S.) that he had known the student and the unfortunate girl personally and that the girl had been to see him shortly before her suicide. 'This girl', Turgenev wrote, 'actually did sit on the window-sill in my room and scratched the frost on the windowpane with her finger-nail' (as described in the story).

The only ascertainable fact of his short stay at Moscow University concerns the curiosity his 'democratic' views seem to have aroused among his fellow-students. 'In my youth,' he declared afterwards, 'when I studied at Moscow University, my democratic tendencies and my enthusiasm for the United States of America became a byword among my fellow students who nicknamed me "The American".'

His second serious illness occurred about the time of his entry to Moscow University. Like all hypochondriacs, Turgenev had queer ideas about his illnesses, and he ascribed the illness which kept him bedridden for several months to his rapid growth. Before he fell ill, he declared, he was of small stature, but when he got out of bed he had almost reached his gigantic height. His character, too, he claimed, had undergone a radical change; before his illness he was mulish and bad-tempered and showed a preference for mathematics, while after it he became soft, weak-willed, fond of poetry and predisposed to dreaminess. What seems really to have affected his character (if indeed there had been any marked change in it since his childhood) was the slow and painful illness of his father, who suffered from gall-stones. Many years later Turgenev, too, imagined that he had a pain in the bladder. His younger brother's illness must also have left its traces on Turgenev. He was an epileptic and died in 1839 at the age of 18. Curiously enough, no reference to his younger brother can be found either in Turgenev's works or in his reminiscences, except, perhaps, his remark in one of his later stories, *The Desperate One*, which deals with the improvident life of one of his cousins, that epilepsy was 'a traditional aristocratic illness' and the unusually detached and almost heartless description (supposed to be of his younger brother) in *Hamlet of Shchigrovsk District*: 'I have a vague memory of my younger brother, who could not walk because of his illness, and who crawled "like a worm" and died very young.'

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

It was in the summer of 1834 that Turgenev had his first mistress. In January 1878 he told his French fellow-writers about it, and Edmond de Goncourt recorded it in his diary. He was asked what was his most vivid recollection of love and, after thinking for some time, he said: 'I was very young, I was a virgin, with the desires one has at the age of fifteen. My mother had a pretty chambermaid, who looked a little silly, but, you know, a silly look lends a certain grandeur to some faces. It was a rather damp day—no, a rainy day, one of those erotic days Daudet likes to describe. It began to drizzle. I was walking in the garden. Suddenly I saw a girl coming towards me. She took—mind you, I was her master, and she was my slave—she took hold of me by the hair at the back of my head and said to me: "Come!" What followed was like the sensations we have all experienced. But that sweet clasp of my hair accompanied by that single word—that still gives me a sensation of happiness every time I think of it.'

The whole incident was too pat not to have had Varvara Petrovna's hand in it. In one of her letters to Turgenev a few years later in connection with another affair of his with a serf girl whom he wanted his mother to set free, Varvara Petrovna expressed the view that a little sum of money should settle the matter. 'It is not as though she presented you with her virginity,' she wrote. 'I did not see any harm in it. Neither you nor she were to blame. It is only physical passion.' No doubt she had also arranged the meeting between her maid and her fifteen-year-old son because she considered that it was time her *Vanichka* satisfied his physical passions. It is inconceivable that one of her maids should have dared to seduce her son in so peremptory a fashion without having been told to do so by her.

2

Turgenev became a student of the philological faculty of Petersburg University in the autumn of 1834. His father had transferred him to Petersburg to be near his elder brother Nicholas who had been gazetted as a cadet of the Artillery College. On 30 October of the same year his father died. Neither Turgenev nor his mother seems to have been greatly grieved by the death of the handsome

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

cavalry colonel. Varvara Petrovna, indeed, was in Italy at the time of her husband's death and she returned from there with a large wardrobe of new dresses which she displayed proudly to her friends.

Turgenev was only sixteen when his father died, but 'even then', he wrote to a correspondent forty years later, 'the hatred of serfdom was alive in me. It was among other things responsible for the fact that, though brought up amid blows and torture, I had never defiled my hand by a single blow, but', he adds, 'it was still a long way to *The Diary of a Sportsman*. I was simply a boy, almost a child.'

And yet though only a boy who was, besides, dreaming of a career as a university professor, he was already hard at work writing poetic dramas and poems. The time was not particularly propitious for a literary career. 'Society', Turgenev writes in his reminiscences, 'still remembered the blow which had struck down its prominent representatives about twelve years earlier [a reference to the leaders of the Decembrist insurrection] and there was as yet no trace of the things that awakened in it afterwards, especially after 1855 [that is, after the death of Nicholas I]. All that was still stirring deeply, but vaguely, in the minds of a few young men. There was no literature in the sense of a living manifestation of one of the great social forces working in concert with others as great or greater . . . as there was no press and as there was no personal liberty. . . .' The censorship was so strict that, according to Turgenev, 'a writer, whoever he was, could not help regarding himself as a kind of smuggler.' The censor cut out everything that could be remotely interpreted as an expression of 'a free spirit' and did not hesitate to 'improve' an author's style. Turgenev kept a page proof on which a censor altered the words 'the girl was like a flower' to 'the young lady resembled a gorgeous rose'. Nor were the professors of Petersburg University remarkable either for ability or scholarship. Some of them were foreigners and read their lectures in German or even in Latin. All the lectures were read from set books which had been carefully censored, and the students were expected to take them down and repeat them verbatim because to answer 'in their own words' was considered 'subversive free-thinking'.

Turgenev brought with him to Petersburg a three-act poetic

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

declared that he did discern a glimmer of talent in it. This encouraged Turgenev to offer him a few of his poems, two of which Pletnyov published in 1838. That however was not the first work of Turgenev's to appear in print. A few years earlier an article of his dealing with a recently published book, *Travels to the Russian Holy Places*, was published under his full name in the *Journal of the Ministry of Education*. In this article the fourteen-year-old Turgenev enlarged on the moral and patriotic significance of the old Russian monasteries and, full of religious fervour, expressed his admiration for the Russian Orthodox Church. Afterwards he denied ever seeing his article in print and refused to recognise 'this childish exercise' as his first published work. He certainly appeared to be much more concerned about the fate of his poetic drama. He sent it to Alexander Nikitenko, who occupied the chair of history of Russian literature. 'I should not have sent you the play,' he explained in a letter to Nikitenko on 26 March 1837 (O.S.) 'had I not thought that you could tell from this first step of mine whether or not I have any literary future.' In the same letter he told Nikitenko that he had already written over a hundred poems, that he had begun a long narrative poem, *An Old Man's Tale*, and was just then writing another long poem, *Our Age*, as a protest against 'the monopoly certain people are exercising over our literature', and that he had, in addition, translated *King Lear* ('with big omissions'), as well as *Othello* ('up to the middle of Act II') and *Manfred*. The first two translations he destroyed because he did not think them good enough. 'And I forgot to tell you,' he concluded, 'that at the end of last year I began another drama, the first act and the whole plan of which are completely finished and which I hope to have completed by the time of my arrival from the country (in September).'

Apart from *Steno* and the two poems published by Pletnyov—*Evening* and *To Venus of Medici*—nothing of that vast output of juvenilia has been preserved. In *Evening* Turgenev meditates in somewhat turgid language on life beyond the grave and 'after questioning nature with a glance' is saddened by the thought that 'not a single living creature has the power to know the secret of existence'. In his second poem he apostrophises Venus as 'the goddess of beauty, love and joy' and deplores the fact that the 'tempestuous ardour' of 'the sons of the South' is 'alien and incomprehensible'

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

to the Russian, and that 'the language of love and passion is no longer audible to us' because—and this is an interesting anticipation of one of the themes of some of his stories 'our souls are withered'.

These sentiments are not at all characteristic of the poetry Turgenev was to write after his return from Germany and Italy, and especially after his meeting with Belinsky. His enthusiasm for the 'pseudo-sublime' school did not last long, but while it lasted he was completely under its influence. When a fellow-student told him that Belinsky had published an article attacking the poet Benedictov, whom he was so sedulously imitating in his own poems, he, too, 'boiled over with indignation at the impudence with which this "so-called critic" dared to assail our idol Benedictov, and yet,' Turgenev adds, 'while I was reading the article I found, to my own consternation and surprise, his [Belinsky's] arguments convincing and—irrefutable. I was ashamed of this truly unexpected feeling—and in the circle of my friends I attacked Belinsky and his article with greater ferocity than ever, but—inside me something whispered that *he was right*. A short while passed, and I no longer read Benedictov. . . .'

3

Nothing perhaps reveals Turgenev's social and intellectual immaturity as a student better than his confession that, though present at the first performance of *The Government Inspector* on 19 April 1836, he did not realise 'the significance of what was taking place before my eyes'. The same was true of the first performance of Glinka's opera *Life for the Czar* (Ivan Susanin) which he saw a few weeks later. 'At the performance of *The Government Inspector*,' Turgenev writes, 'I at least laughed a great deal like the rest of the audience, but at the performance of *Life for the Czar* I was simply bored. . . . The music of Glinka at any rate I ought to have been able to understand.'

He met Gogol himself quite frequently in 1838 in the unaccustomed and rather ridiculous role of professor of history; Gogol, who had received his university post as a sinecure, was, according to Turgenev, a most 'original' lecturer. 'First,' Turgenev writes,

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

'he always missed two out of three lectures; secondly, even when he appeared on the rostrum, he never spoke up, but whispered something incoherently, showed us small etchings of views of Palestine and other oriental countries, and all the time was terribly ill at ease. We were all convinced,' Turgenev goes on, '(and we were hardly mistaken) that he knew nothing of history, and that indeed our Professor Gogol-Yanovsky (that is how his name appeared on the time-table) had nothing in common with the writer Gogol, already famous as the author of *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*. At the final examination in his subject he sat with his face wrapped round in a handkerchief, as though suffering from toothache, and did not open his mouth. The questions he should have asked were put by another professor. When I close my eyes, I can still see his lean, long-nosed face and the two corners of the black silk handkerchief sticking out like two ears. There is no doubt,' Turgenev concludes, 'that he realised very well the absurd and comic character of his position. This, however, did not prevent him from exclaiming, "Unrecognised I took up my chair and unrecognised I left it!" He was born to become the instructor of his contemporaries, but not from a university chair.'

Pushkin, whom he later regarded as his teacher and 'unattainable model' and of whom he wrote: 'I can say to each of my works as Stacius said of Virgil: *Vestigia semper adoro*,' Turgenev did not seem to have made any effort to meet. The 'pseudo-sublime' school for a time completely eclipsed the great poet's reputation, and Turgenev met him only twice by sheer chance. Invited by Pletnyov to one of his literary evenings at the beginning of 1837, Turgenev saw in the entrance hall a man of medium height, who had already put on his hat and coat and who said to Pletnyov in a sonorous voice: 'Yes, yes, our ministers are indeed marvellous!' He laughed and went out. That was Pushkin. All Turgenev had time to notice was the poet's white teeth and his quick, bright eyes. The second time Turgenev saw him was at a matinee concert a few days before he was killed in a duel in February 1837. 'He was standing at the door, leaning against the lintel,' Turgenev writes, 'and, with his hands folded across his wide chest, looked about him with a disgruntled air. I remember his dark face, his African lips, the flash of his white teeth, his pendant sidewhiskers, his dark jaundiced eyes

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

beneath his high forehead with almost no eyebrows, and his curly hair. . . . He threw a quick glance at me; the unceremonious way in which I stared at him must have annoyed him, for he looked vexed, shrugged—he did not seem to be in a good mood that morning—and walked away. A few days later I saw him lying in his coffin. . . .’

In addition to his regular lectures, Turgenev devoted a great deal of his time to the study of Latin and Greek, reading and translating Horace, Tacitus, Sophocles, Thucydides and other Greek and Roman classics.

His summer holidays he spent in Spasskoye. The tag end of his boyhood seems to have been the happiest time of his life. He struck everybody who came across him in the country in those years as lighthearted and full of high spirits. His mother had just then adopted Varvara Zhitov and he romped about with the little girl, playing all sorts of games with her and teaching her ‘frog-Greek’, that is, making her repeat after him the chorus from *The Frogs*: ko-ax-ko-ax-ko-ax, brekekekex, ko-ax, in his high falsetto voice, which sounded so strange coming from his huge frame, and then bursting into peals of laughter. His loud laughter displeased Varvara Petrovna, who pointed out to him that an aristocrat like him should not cultivate so vulgar a ‘middle-class’ laugh: ‘*Mais cessez donc, Jean,*’ she would cry, ‘*c’est même mauvais genre de rire ainsi. Qu’est-ce que ce rire bourgeois!*’

During this period his relations with his mother were most happy. Varvara Petrovna had undergone a small operation just then and Turgenev looked after her devotedly and watched over her at night. ‘In his presence,’ a visitor to Spasskoye records, ‘Varvara Petrovna did her best to make things pleasant for everybody if only for the sake of watching the expression of pleasure on her son’s face.’

He took his degree in June 1837, and next spring left for Berlin to complete his studies. ‘At the time,’ he wrote afterwards, ‘I was planning to become a pedagogue, a professor, but soon I met Belinsky, began writing poetry and afterwards prose, and my dreams and plans of becoming a professor of philosophy were put aside: I devoted myself entirely to literature.’

4

During the next five years, from 1838 to 1843, Turgenev went through an acute phase of Hegelian idealism from which he only recovered after his transcendental love affair with Bakunin's sister Tatyana. But before 'plunging into the German ocean' he had gone through an adventure on the real sea which he never forgot and which gave rise to all sorts of discreditable stories about him. He travelled to Berlin by sea via Stettin. His mother did everything a loving mother could be expected to do. She came to Petersburg to see him off. She arranged a special farewell service at the Kazan Cathedral. During the service she wept. After seeing off her *Vanichka* on board the steamer, she fainted.

'Mother,' Turgenev declared, 'let me travel alone for the first time, and I had to promise her to behave sensibly and, above all, not to touch cards.' He kept his promise for a whole day, which he spent playing chess with a passenger. In the evening he went to the big saloon—beautifully groomed, clean shaven, his hair arranged, according to the latest fashion, *à la* Liszt, his silk cravat wound round his neck like a scarf, full of eager anticipation of what German philosophy and learning might mean to his future career, but not unappreciative of the more mundane amusements afforded by the aristocratic society on board ship. At one of the tables a group of men were playing cards. One of them, noticing Turgenev's bulky and resplendently attired figure looming in the background, asked him to join them and burst out laughing when Turgenev naïvely told him of the promise he had given his mother not to play cards for money. That was enough: Turgenev's vanity was hurt and he immediately sat down to play. 'I don't know how it happened,' Turgenev writes, 'but ten minutes later I was already sitting at the table and playing recklessly.' He had beginner's luck: two heaps of gold soon lay on either side of his trembling and perspiring hands. He was already dreaming of untold riches when the door of the saloon suddenly burst open, and a woman passenger rushed in with a shout of 'Fire!' and collapsed on a sofa in a dead faint. The steamer was on fire.

The panic which arose among the passengers can be easily

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

imagined; what is not so easy to imagine or to reconstruct is what Turgenev did during that panic. According to Annekov, he lost his head completely and rushed about appealing to every man who would listen to him to save him as he was the son of a rich widow. According to Mrs. Panayev (not by any means an impartial authority), he pushed his way through a crowd of women and children to the boat which had been lowered from the burning ship and had to be sternly ordered back by the captain, after which he kept crying plaintively: '*Mourir si jeune!*' His mother wrote to him later: 'Why were only your lamentations noticed on the boat? Rumours about it are reaching me from everywhere, and I have been told about it by many people, to my great distress: '*Ce gros Tourguéniéff qui se lamentait, qui disait mourir si jeune*—Countess Tolstoy . . . Princess Galitzine . . . and lots of others. There were ladies on board ship, mothers with families: why do they tell this only about you? That you are a *gros monsieur* is not your fault, but! that you are a coward—which the other passengers could not help noticing in their panic—that has left a stain on you, if not of dishonour, then of *ridicule*—you must admit.'

It is, of course, unfortunate that Turgenev was such a big man, and even more unfortunate that for a big man he had such a thin, shrill, womanish voice, for these physical peculiarities of his impressed themselves on his fellow-passengers who might not otherwise have remembered and embellished whatever he had done in the general panic. Anyway, Turgenev would not admit that he had behaved disgracefully. When thirty years later Prince Dolgorukov, a political émigré, who had been a passenger on the burning ship, gave a highly coloured description of the incident, claiming that he had heard Turgenev cry, 'For God's sake, save me—I'm my mother's only son!' Turgenev sent the following letter to the editor of *Moscow News*: 'I knew before that Prince Dolgorukov had thought fit to dig up the old story of how thirty years ago (in May 1838) I, who was a passenger on S.S. *Nicholas I*, which caught fire near Trawemuende, cried: "Save me, I'm my mother's only son," (the joke here is that I called myself an only son while I have a brother). The proximity of death might well have confounded a boy of nineteen, and I do not intend to claim that I looked upon it with indifference, but the above-mentioned words,

invented the following day by a witty prince (not Dolgorukov), I never uttered.'

The whole incident, even if the most discreditable version of it had been true, might not have deserved the attention Turgenev's biographers have paid it, were it not for the fact that Turgenev himself kept referring to it all through his life and that it had passed into literature through Dostoevsky, who gives a malicious version of it in *The Devils*. It is certainly significant that shortly before his death Turgenev should have dictated his own version of it to Pauline Viardot in French (a Russian translation of this, under the title *Fire at Sea*, appeared in the first edition of his collected works in 1883) for it shows how much his complete loss of nerve in a moment of great danger had worried him even on his deathbed. Physical courage he never possessed: he was too imaginative for that and perhaps also too mollycoddled as a child in spite of his mother's beatings.

What is interesting is that even at the moment of his greatest panic, his powers of observation should not have deserted him, as is evident from his description of some of his fellow-passengers on board the *Nicholas I*, such as the rich landowner who crawled on the burning dack, praying and prostrating himself, and when the fire had been brought under control for a short time, rose to his full height and shouted, 'Men of little faith, did you really think that our God, our Russian God, would ever forsake us?' only to prostrate himself again when the fire blazed up a few moments later; or of the general who, looking lost and bewildered, kept shouting 'We must send a courier to the Emperor. We sent a courier to him when the soldiers in the army settlements mutinied, and that saved some of us at any rate;' or of a wealthy landowner who kept poking an oil painting (which did not belong to him) viciously with his umbrella, shouting 'Of what damned use is this now?'; or of a fat man who kept moaning, 'Captain! Captain!' and when the captain caught him by the scruff of the neck and shouted 'Well?' looked crestfallen at him and continued to moan 'Captain! Captain!' All this is too authentic to have been invented. But all Turgenev would admit about himself was that he, too, had been seized by 'a desperate feeling of self-preservation' and that he had offered a sailor ten thousand roubles in the name of his mother if he

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

would save him. Less credible is his account of himself sitting quietly on an iron ladder while the ship was blazing and teasing a little old woman who had also found refuge on the ladder by threatening to throw himself overboard 'out of sheer bravado, which was quite inexplicable in my position', or that he had lowered himself by the anchor chain into one of the boats with a woman, who had fainted, clinging round his neck; or even that when in the boat he had saved the lives of three women who had jumped from the burning ship by catching them in his arms.

The fire had occurred near the shore and there were only eight casualties. Turgenev eventually got to Hamburg and from there to Berlin.

5

In Berlin, Turgenev states, 'I studied philosophy, history, Latin and Greek, and applied myself with especial zeal to a study of Hegel under the guidance of Professor Werder. As an example of the inadequacy of the education we received at the time in our universities, I can mention the following fact: in Berlin I took Roman antiquities with Professor Zumpf and the history of Greek literature with Professor Boekh—and I was obliged to swot up Latin and Greek grammar at home because I knew very little of it. And yet I was not the worst graduate' (of Petersburg University).

Turgenev was introduced to Stankevich in April 1838 by Granovsky, who afterwards became a popular professor of history of Moscow University and whom Turgenev had first met in Petersburg. Neither Granovsky nor Stankevich seems to have taken any great interest in the nineteen-year-old Turgenev, Granovsky visiting him only once and Stankevich not at all. Stankevich had a German girl-friend by the name of Berta (the Hegelians had a very useful habit of dividing women into those they could be in love with and those they could make love to), who was apparently the chief cause of his coldness towards Turgenev. 'I went riding with Berta in the Tiergarten one day,' Turgenev writes in his short monograph on Stankevich. 'She flirted with me and on her return assured Stankevich that I had proposed to her, though really I never felt attracted to her.'

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

Turgenev, like Stankevich, took full advantage of the various entertainments Berlin provided, going frequently to the theatre and the opera. He was as usual extraordinarily uninhibited, clapping furiously and yelling at the top of his thin voice for his favourite actor and actress, which called forth a stern rebuke from his mother, to whom he wrote about it. He met the Berlin intellectual society at the house of the Frolovs. Frolov was a Russian geographer who had translated Humboldt's *Kosmos*, and Mrs. Frolov, an ailing, middle-aged lady, was, according to Turgenev, a most remarkable woman who possessed the art '*de mettre les gens à leur aise*', and though she spoke very little herself, 'one never forgot a word she uttered.' Bettina von Arnim, Goethe's intimate friend, whose published correspondence with the great German poet was one of Tatyana Bakunin's most treasured books, was a frequent visitor at their house as well as Humboldt himself and Professor Werder, a typical German idealist who put all his faith in 'the beautiful and rational soul of man', and whom his students liked to serenade. 'I went there to gape and listen,' Turgenev writes. 'Frolov himself,' he goes on, 'never took part in the conversation, sitting in a corner, pouring out tea, grunting significantly, rolling his eyes, fingering his moustache, but never opening his mouth. Mrs. Frolov liked and respected Stankevich very much, but I never heard her discussing philosophy with him. That was Werder's business, and Werder was not fond of talking. Once after Werder's departure I could not help exclaiming, "I've heard him talk today for the first time." "Yes," replied Mrs. Frolov, "it's a pity he is only acquainted with himself." Varnhagen von Ense (the well-known biographer) also used to visit the Frolovs,' Turgenev concludes. 'He liked to show up Bettina, who could not stand him and called him *Giftesel*.'

Turgenev took with him to Berlin as his servant Porfiry Kudryashev, an illegitimate son of his father's. Porfiry's mother was a serf girl in Spasskoye and he, too, was therefore a serf. The best proof that Turgenev meant every word he said about his hatred of serfdom is provided by his treatment of Porfiry. He insisted that his unfortunate half brother should attend the medical courses at Berlin University, and when he had to return to Russia he tried in vain to persuade Porfiry to finish his studies and settle in Germany. Porfiry, who had in the meantime acquired a German

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

fiancée, would not hear of it and, leaving his fiancée, returned to Spasskoye where Varvara Petrovna rewarded him for his 'loyalty' by making him her house doctor. After her death, Turgenev gave Porfiry his freedom and made him take a course in dentistry at Moscow University. Porfiry was as feckless in his private affairs as Turgenev himself. He seemed to feel his inferior social status very deeply and persisted with a kind of perverted stubbornness in treating Turgenev as his master.

In Berlin the two of them amused themselves by playing with cardboard soldiers (Granovsky discovered them at this childish game during his only visit to Turgenev). Another of their amusements was ratting. 'The moment we were told that there was a rat in the house,' Turgenev records, 'I'd leave Hegel and all his philosophy and run with Porfiry and my dog to hunt rats.'

Amid all these sports and amusements it is not surprising that Turgenev did not keep up his correspondence with his mother. But Varvara Petrovna did not forget her favourite son. Indeed, she overwhelmed him with hysterical letters full of extravagant endearments and no less extravagant threats and imperative 'buts!' 'I am sometimes afraid,' she confessed in one of her letters, 'of making you hardened against me by my constant reproaches and admonitions. But! you must accept my excuses. All my life,' she concluded characteristically, 'I have had only enemies and people who envied me.' And in another letter she wrote: 'Once again I repeat my authoritative and despotic order. You need not write. You can miss any post you like, but!—you must tell Porfiry that you are not going to write to your mother by the next post. Then Porfiry will take pen and paper and write to me briefly and to the point—Ivan Sergeyevich is well—I want nothing more. But! if both of you miss the post, I shall most certainly give a good thrashing to little Nicholas [a boy serf]. I am sorry to have to do that, for he is a sweet little boy. I look after him and he does his lessons well, but it can't be helped: the poor boy will have to suffer. Take care you don't make me commit such a sin.'

Varvara Petrovna had more reasons for being dissatisfied with her son. He was, for instance, very remiss in carrying out her commissions. She asked him to send her flower seeds for their garden. Sometimes he sent them, but more often not. He was, in fact, too

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

busy gathering impressions, studying, rushing about Berlin coffee houses, going to theatres, writing poetry and—having an affair with the wife of the poet Tyutchev, a good-looking middle-aged woman with four children, who had travelled with him from Petersburg and whom he had offered his carriage after they had been saved from the burning steamer. The news of her son's 'little love affair' with a married woman of good position pleased Varvara Petrovna no end. She had just been reading Charles de Bernard's novel *La femme de quarante ans* and she congratulated her son on his excellent choice of a mistress. 'I always hoped that you would have an affair with an experienced middle-aged woman,' she wrote to him. 'It is such women who are most useful to a young man's education. She feels flattered and he benefits from her experience.' She was very sorry to hear that her son's affair had come to an end with the sudden death of Mrs. Tyutchev in the spring of 1839. 'She must have been an intelligent woman,' she remarked comfortingly. 'You wouldn't have fallen in love with a fool.'

Turgenev returned to Russia in October 1839, at the bidding of his mother, who threatened to descend on him in Berlin, and spent some time in Spasskoye, but in January 1840 he was off again, this time to Italy.

Turgenev met Stankevich again in Rome at the beginning of 1840 and the two became inseparable. There was a difference of only six years between them—Turgenev was twenty-one and Stankevich twenty-seven—but Turgenev's role is best described as that of disciple rather than a friend. 'Stankevich,' he wrote, 'has told me off rather severely a few times, which he never did in Berlin, where he avoided me.' It was Turgenev's first lesson in humility, and the fact that he accepted it without a murmur shows how great Stankevich's authority over him must have been. The two of them often visited a Russian family, consisting of a father, a retired hussar ('a very stupid person,' Turgenev described him), a mother, a well-known Moscow society woman, and two daughters. Turgenev fell in love with their elder daughter Chouchou (Alexandra), who was only sixteen. 'She was very sweet,' Turgenev writes, 'and I believe secretly in love with Stankevich, who treated her like a friend and almost like a father.' Stankevich used to play piano duets with her, and Turgenev wrote a poem for her in which

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

he compared her to the chaste moon, so unresponsive was she to 'the anguish of his soul'. (It is significant of the genuine feeling Chouchou inspired in him that he did not destroy the poem as he did the others he wrote at the time, and eighteen years later included it in *A Nobleman's Nest*).

Stankevich was already seriously ill,—he had consumption—but his spirit never flagged, and though his hacking cough often interrupted his speech, he never uttered a word of complaint. He and Turgenev often discussed death, and Turgenev could not help feeling that 'inwardly the thought of it made him shudder'. Sometimes he would get a premonition of his approaching end. 'One evening,' Turgenev writes in his *Monograph on Stankevich*, 'as we were returning in an open carriage from Albano, we passed a tall ruin covered with ivy. For some reason I suddenly took it into my head to shout in a loud voice: Divus Caius Julius Caesar! and my shout re-echoed like a moan in the ruin. Stankevich, who had till then been very cheerful and talkative, suddenly turned pale, fell silent, and after a moment's pause said with a sort of queer expression on his face, "Why did you do that?"' (Many years later Turgenev used this incident in his fantasy *Phantoms* in which he, as it were, personified the feeling of eeriness of the scene by the appearance of the ghostly shapes of Roman legions and, after the muffled cry, *Caesar, Caesar venit*, of the 'pale, stern head of the emperor in a laurel wreath and with closed eyes', who rose slowly over the ruin, striking terror in the narrator's heart).

While in Rome, Turgenev took lessons in painting and drawing. He seems to have been very good at drawing caricatures (an art in which he later excelled). 'In Rome,' he writes, 'I used to draw caricatures, sometimes very well. Stankevich would suggest a subject to me and was often highly amused. One of my caricatures in which I depicted the wedding of Markov (a painter, now a professor) made him laugh heartily; Markov also pined for Chouchou, to whom, sinner that I am, I, too, was not altogether indifferent.'

Stankevich's influence on Turgenev is hard to define since it was entirely on the moral plane. 'He breathed fire and strength into us.' Turgenev himself defined it in *Rudin* where he gave what he called 'a pale sketch' of Stankevich under the name of Pokrovsky. In a letter to Granovsky from Berlin shortly after Stankevich's death in

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

Italy on 24 June, Turgenev declared that the leader of the Russian Hegelians had 'sowed the seeds of great aspirations' in him. 'A great misfortune has befallen us, Granovsky,' he begins his letter. 'We have lost a man whom we loved, in whom we believed and who was our pride and our hope.' 'Stankevich,' he wrote sixteen years later in the monograph he prepared for Stankevich's biographer, Annenkov, 'exerted such an influence over others because he never thought of himself, because he was genuinely interested in every man and, without being aware of it himself, "carried him off into the sphere of the Ideal"'. Another quality Turgenev valued highly in Stankevich was that, as he put it, 'he had not a trace of a phrase in him.' Indeed, Stankevich's simplicity and sincerity must have struck Turgenev most at a time when he himself was anything but simple or sincere. It was that, he realised, which inspired 'the great respect and almost veneration for him in people'.

Turgenev left Italy in May 1840, and went on a walking tour through Switzerland. He dressed like a tourist, with a rucksack on his back and a stout stick in his hand. He described his strange 'Byronic' journey through Switzerland in one of his last *Poems in Prose*, which he wrote in November 1882, nine months before his death, and which he never intended to be published. He was 'very young, very vain and very lonely' at the time, and 'without having really experienced anything, he was bored, disheartened and in a bad humour'. Everything seemed contemptible and vulgar to him, and he thought 'with a feeling of secret malice' of suicide. He wanted to show them, to revenge himself on them—on whom? He did not know. Byron was his idol, and Manfred his hero. And so, like Manfred, he walked one evening to the summit of a mountain where he was 'alone with his sorrow, his despair and his contempt'. He was alone face to face with death. A secret horror gripped his heart, but he imagined himself a great man! He was about to bid a last farewell to the 'contemptible' world when a strange cry reached his ears. It was the cry of a newborn baby, and he was suddenly overcome by a feeling of boundless joy. Byron, Manfred, his longing for death, his pride, his dreams of greatness—everything suddenly vanished. He rushed towards the cry and soon came to the stone hut of an Alpine shepherd, in front of which a young woman was feeding her baby. 'Oh, ardent cry of human life just born,'

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

Turgenev concludes his prose poem, 'you saved me, you cured me!'

Did this incident actually happen or is it merely a symbolic reconstruction of Turgenev's spiritual journey from romanticism to realism? The cry of the human baby—the anguish of the human heart—in the end killed the Hegelian in him, and the supercilious philosopher became the compassionate creative artist. But that happened much later. His poem in prose, however, is no doubt a faithful description of his mood as he travelled through Switzerland and his longing for death is a true reflection of that mood. Did not Steno, the melodramatic hero of his Byronic drama, too, commit suicide? Even his climb to the top of the mountain and the cry of the baby at the psychological moment may well have occurred, though it might be some time before he realised the true significance of his adventure.

'You will find my whole biography in my works,' Turgenev wrote to a correspondent. To Countess Lambert he wrote on 17 February 1860: 'Imagination, in spite of all its seeming diversity and richness, is poorer and more monotonous than life, that is to say, it is not so original.' Indeed, his two stories, *Three Meetings* and *Phantoms*, and his one-act play *An Evening in Sorrento* are wholly or partially based on incidents and characters he had observed during his stay in Italy. And his story *Faust*, in which many autobiographical incidents can be found, such as, for instance, his experiences of Berlin theatrical life, contains this significant sentence describing his 'Byronic' mood in Switzerland: 'I used to carry my grief about with me as though it were a treasure and I was ashamed of any gay impulse.' Then there is *Spring Waters*, one of the finest stories of his later period, based on an incident that happened while he was passing through Frankfort-on-Main on his way to Berlin. A contemporary biographer reports on the authority of Turgenev: 'Like Sanin in *Spring Waters*, so Turgenev too was approached in a pastry-cook's in Frankfort-on-Main by a beautiful young girl, who asked him to come to the assistance of her brother who had fainted. But the girl was not an Italian, but a Jewess, who had a sister as well as a brother.' Turgenev fell deeply in love with the girl and it was only after a long struggle that he could bring himself to leave the town.

6

Turgenev met Bakunin, the future founder of the anarchist movement, in Berlin. 'Stankevich died on 25 June 1840,' he wrote in his notebook, and under it he put: 'I met Bakunin on 25 July 1840.' In a letter to Bakunin in September from Marienbad where he had gone on a holiday, he wrote: 'I arrived in Berlin, I devoted myself to my studies—the first stars rose in my sky and at last I met you, Bakunin. Stankevich brought us together—and death will not part us. I can hardly put into words what I owe to you. . . . The rest which I am enjoying now,' he goes on, 'is perhaps what I need most: I look back from my cell and sink into quiet contemplation. I see a man who at first walks timidly, then with faith and gladness, down the side of a high mountain, which is bathed in eternal light: a comrade walks beside him, and they hurry on and on, supporting each other, while the gentle moon is shining from above, a beautiful, familiar, and yet also unfamiliar sight; he feels happy and at ease and he believes in the attainment of his goal.'

He was now caught up in the maelstrom of the Hegelian philosophy as interpreted by the irrepressible Michel. From now on his letters are full of long Hegelian reflections in German. *Verstand, Geist, Vernunft*—the whole philosophic vernacular is there. '*Wie kann man da die Vermittlung des Denkens laeugnen! Und des reinen Denkens, da wir ja das hoechste Denkende, die Idee, Gott in uns erschaffen sollen. Was haben die Neoschellingianer? Gott als eine tiefe Aspiration der Seele, eigentlich ein Abstractes an dem sie bunte Traeumereien anhaengen. Eine philosophische Ueberzeugung fassen ist das hoechste Kunstwerk und die Philosophen sind die groessten Meister und Kuenstler. Eigentlich hoert hier die Kunst auf Kunst zu sein: sie loest sich auf in Philosophie.*'¹

This reads almost like an incantation, and it is not surprising

¹ 'How can one deny the communication of thought? And of pure thought, since we have to recreate the highest expression of thought, the Idea, God in ourselves. What do we find in the Neo-Schellingians? God as a deep aspiration of the soul, in reality an abstraction to which they attach their motley daydreams. To obtain a philosophic conviction is the highest form of art and the philosophers are the greatest artists. Indeed, art ceases to be art here: it dissolves itself in philosophy.'

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

that when he came across his note-books of philosophy many years later, Turgenev should have declared that he had never read such rubbish. For the next two or three years, however, it was to become his only intellectual nourishment. For a whole year Turgenev and Bakunin lived together. Annenkov records how one evening he met, in a Berlin café in *Unter den Linden*, 'two tall Russians with extraordinarily handsome and expressive faces—Turgenev and Bakunin, who were then inseparable'.

They organised readings and spent the nights discussing philosophic problems, Turgenev walking up and down the room and Bakunin lying on a sofa. Some evenings they spent with Bakunin's sister, Varvara Dyakov, and her son, drinking tea, eating tongue sandwiches, singing, laughing, arguing. They went to concerts and the theatre, Turgenev in a green velvet coat and Bakunin in a mauve one. 'Let's go,' Herzen records Bakunin as saying to Turgenev, 'and plunge into the gulf of real life!'—and, Herzen continues, 'they went to ask Varnhagen von Ense to introduce them to a pretty actress.'

Turgenev, always methodical, had drawn up a programme of studies, in which he insisted on including Greek and Latin (he was reading a great deal of Homer and the Greek dramatists). But quite soon he became aware of the cardinal difference between Stankevich and Bakunin. Bakunin was more dazzling, a better speaker, and had perhaps more enthusiasm, but he had no original ideas: he borrowed them from others. He seemed more talented than Stankevich, but in reality he was, as Turgenev put it in *Rudin*, a pauper compared with him. He seemed full of fire, courage and life, but was cold and almost timid at heart, till, that is, his vanity was hurt; then, he would stop at nothing. He was not liked; Turgenev was perhaps the only man who became genuinely attached to him. The time would come when, though always loyal to Bakunin and ready to help him, Turgenev would deny that Bakunin could lay any claim to genius. 'People,' he wrote to Polonsky in January 1868, 'did not tumble to the fact that Bakunin was such an amazing fool because he was such an involved and subtle fool—and we always suspect depth in a case like that: a man mumbles because his tongue is too large and we think: oh, he has so many ideas that he can't express them all.' But in Berlin he never doubted Bakunin's genius,

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

though he might occasionally have become uneasy about his character. There is, indeed, a reference in a long review which he wrote for *Home Annals* of a translation of Goethe's *Faust* only three years after his return from Berlin, that reads very much like an early criticism of Bakunin. Discussing the character of Mephistopheles, Turgenev declares that he is the devil who obsesses 'lonely people given to abstract reflections, people who are deeply worried by some trifling contradiction in their own lives, but who will go past an artisan's family dying of hunger with complete indifference. . . . Such a man', he goes on, 'is alarming not by himself, but by the influence he exerts on a number of youths who, thanks to him or, to put it more plainly, thanks to their own timid and egoistic minds, never leave the narrow confines of their own charming selves.' Turgenev always required the passage of time, very often of years, to form a just appreciation of the character of a man, and that is why he so frequently went wrong in his immediate judgments of people. In Berlin, besides, he was too preoccupied with his own studies, his vast reading, his translations of Goethe's lyrics, and his own poetry. It was there that he laid the foundation of that great accumulation of knowledge of European culture which made him the greatest European of his time.

7

Turgenev returned to Russia, where he hoped to obtain his M.A. and a chair of philosophy, in the spring of 1841. Two years earlier, in May 1839, the Spasskoye mansion had burnt down. The fire seems to have been started in a stable by a peasant woman who had buried a bast-shoe with hot coals as part of a ritual for fumigating a sick cow. In a letter to Turgenev, Varvara Petrovna described how after the departure of some guests in the evening, she had been lying down on a sofa in one of the downstairs drawing rooms, when a spark flew in at the window, followed by a red hot cinder, and how suddenly the red glow of a fire lit up the whole park. By midnight there was nothing left of the vast Lutovinov mansion except one wing, in which Varvara Petrovna and afterwards Turgenev lived during their stay in Spasskoye.

He spent most of the summer of 1841 in Spasskoye. As usual

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

when in the country, he gave himself up almost entirely to his favourite sport of shooting, and was invariably accompanied on his expeditions by the tall, lean figure of his favourite gamekeeper Afanasy Ivanov, whom he portrayed under the name of Yermolay in his *Diary of a Sportsman*. He would usually leave Spasskoye early in the morning either on foot (he had by that time become an indefatigable country walker, which accounted for his pronounced stoop) or in a rug-covered cart with the provisions for a several days' shoot. From the top of the hill beyond the village there opened up before him the view he so lovingly described in *Woods and Steppe*: the small river Ista, meandering leisurely for miles, with its dams and water mills, the ponds with their willow trees, the kitchen gardens surrounded by orchards, and, behind the water-meadows and marshes with the lapwings wheeling over them, a long stretch of gently undulating countryside which gradually merged into the vast Ukrainian steppe. There would be a sharp tang of wormwood, buckwheat and clover in the air. After a day's shoot he would have a meal at a peasant's cottage and spend the night in some hay barn where a bed would be made for him (he was terrified of cockroaches and never spent the night in a peasant's cottage where these insects abounded). It was in this way that he accumulated his impressions of the countryside round Spasskoye and its inhabitants, which were to form the raw material for his *Diary of a Sportsman*.

His relations with his mother seem to have been excellent at first. He always tried hard to be a devoted son to her, and till their inevitable quarrels started she returned his affection and did all she could to please him. She gave him introductions to her influential friends in Moscow and, always anxious to share his intimate life with him, supplied him with a carefully selected list of young society girls, those he could safely flirt with and those it was advisable for him to avoid. But very soon his mother's autocratic habits clashed with his deepest convictions and the constant cruelties of a slave-owning society made life unbearable to him. His first sharp disagreement with his mother occurred over Porfiry. He implored her to give Porfiry his freedom. 'I swear to you,' he said to her one day, according to an eyewitness, 'I swear to you that he will never leave you. Just let him have the consciousness that he is a man and

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

not a slave, not a thing, whom you can treat just as you please.' He tried hard to make her realise the humiliating position of a man who lived in a continuous state of fear. But Varvara Petrovna simply refused to understand his arguments. He would then lose patience with her and begin to threaten her with the inevitable end of serfdom, and that would make her lose her temper and she would start abusing him and his prophecies.

Varvara Petrovna's relations with her eldest son reached a crisis in the winter of 1841, when Nicholas secretly married Anna Schwartz, a poor German girl whom his mother employed as a parlour maid. Varvara Petrovna at once stopped his allowance and he was forced to resign his commission and get a job in the Civil Service.

In the spring of 1842 Turgenev installed himself in Nicholas' flat in Petersburg and began working for his M.A. examinations. He was, he told a friend, blissfully happy and enjoying his solitude 'with tremulous, secret and rapturous joy—and working—working hard'.

But he got about a great deal, too. Indeed, his behaviour after his return from abroad was extremely odd. People found him insincere and pretentious. He had even acquired the reputation of a fatuous man about town. He dressed fashionably in a blue swallow-tail coat with gold, lion-headed buttons, checkered trousers, a white waistcoat, and a coloured cravat. 'I used to meet on Nevsky Avenue a tall and handsome young man with a monocle in his eye and gentlemanly manners which struck me as a little foppish,' Panayev records Ivan in his memoirs. 'I thought it was some rich man about town and was surprised to learn that it was Turgenev.' Annenkov explains this strange affectation by Turgenev's dread of being like everybody else. 'Turgenev,' he writes, 'purposely pretended to possess all sorts of peculiar qualities and even vices so as to be different from anybody else. He would sometimes even assume a look which was quite out of keeping with the good-natured, almost tender expression of his face. He did not of course deceive anybody long and would soon forget the part he had tried to play. He would sometimes even indignantly repudiate a statement he himself had made only a short while before, such as that when in the presence of a great work of art he felt an itching behind the knees and his calves turned into triangles.'

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

Turgenev himself declared many years later that he had been 'a disgusting fop and a pretentious one at that' in those days. But he always was an unusually severe judge of himself and his works. He came much nearer to the truth when he pointed out on another occasion that 'self-confidence, exaggeration, a certain kind of phrase and pose, a certain cynicism even, is an inevitable concomitant of youth'. If he posed and played the fool, he did it as much for the sake of showing off as for the sake of shocking a society which he could not help despising for its cowardly acceptance of a barbarous social order. It was not safe to express one's views freely in those days, and an absurd epigram or a supercilious attitude towards those who fawned on wealth and rank was perhaps the easiest way of relieving his feelings. Away from the gaze of the world he became quite a different person. What, for instance, could be more humorous and less pretentious than his description of the way he was working for his examinations which he gave in a letter to Bakunin's brother Alexey? 'I am sitting in an armchair before the fire and reading Fichte,' he wrote on 9 April 1842 (O.S.). 'Here is the trend of my thoughts: *wir sehen einen absoluten Grundsatz—finden—ha, ha—must put on some more logs (done). Das ich rech sich als—ha, ha—In silence beneath the window of the dungeon I sit—this is followed by a whole whirl of thoughts. . . . (What thoughts is not your business.) Fichte behauptet—I read these words twenty-five times and don't understand them—at last I shake my head and start again. . . . I yawn, I walk up to the window and sing: ta-ra-tum, ta-ra-ra—tum-tum (Grund's sonata). . . . Watch the falling snowflakes for ten minutes—walk up and down the room—imagine myself a Cabinet minister—but it's time I went back to Fichte—first I gaze smilingly at the fire for five minutes—then: *im ich ist das Princip sich zu sehen und das Princip sich am nicht zu sehen. . . .* Oh, the bliss, the bliss, the bliss of secluded, unhurried work which gives you the chance of dreaming and thinking all sorts of nonsense and even writing it!'*

Four days later he could announce to the same correspondent that he had passed his oral examination in philosophy with distinction, 'that is,' he explained, 'I talked an awful lot of platitudes and drove my professors into a state of rapture, though I am sure that all those specialist-scholars (historians, mathematicians, etc.) could

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

not help inwardly despising both philosophy and me: why, I should have despised them, if they had not despised me.'

He was at the same time busy writing another poetic drama, *The Temptation of St. Anthony*. He had already written three scenes of the play and hoped to finish it by the time he went back to Moscow. 'You will meet a certain young lady—Annunziata—there,' he wrote to Alexey Bakunin, 'who, though she is the mistress of the devil, is a charming young lady.'

A few weeks later he passed his examinations in Latin and Greek. In his paper on philosophy, for which he had Pantheism for his subject, he took strong exception (as indeed was to be expected from a follower of Stankevich and Bakunin) to Feuererbach's *Wesen des Christentums*, which was just then being hotly debated among the young Russian intellectuals, and defended revealed religion. To get his M.A. he had to defend a dissertation in public, and he left for Moscow ostensibly with the intention of working for it. But something happened to make him give up the idea of obtaining his degree or pressing for the consideration of his application for the vacant chair of philosophy at Moscow University. (The chair of philosophy had been abolished a short time after the Decembrist insurrection, so called because it took place on 14 December 1825, the Russian government deciding that it was impossible to draw any distinction between dangerous and not dangerous thoughts.) What happened was also of cardinal importance to Turgenev's development as a writer, for it brought about a complete break with his romantic past and freed him from his Hegelian obsessions, thus changing his whole outlook on life.

8

Only a great emotional crisis could have brought about such a sudden change in Turgenev. He went through such a crisis as a result of his strange affair with Bakunin's sister Tatyana. Tatyana had fully absorbed her brother's Hegelian theories, especially his theory on the part a woman was supposed to play in 'the ideal world of religion and philosophy'. Bakunin expressed his views on the position of women in this ideal world in a letter he wrote to his sister in September 1838. 'Love,' he declared, 'is a mystery and

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

woman is the priestess of this mystery—a priestess who reveals it as daughter, wife and mother. This is woman's sacred vocation: she is a vestal and the guardian of the sacred flame of married life.' Tatyana accepted ecstatically her role of vestal and guardian of the sanctity of the hearth, which, according to Hegel, is woman's ideal vocation. 'I understand everything you demand,' she wrote to Bakunin, 'and I feel profoundly all the sanctity of woman's truly beautiful vocation.'

While engaged in his 'metaphysical entanglement', as one of his biographers put it, with Tatyana Bakunin, Turgenev, like a true Hegelian, had a very prosaic affair with a sempstress employed by his mother at Spasskoye. She was a very quiet, gentle, fair-haired young girl, who was not a serf but the daughter of a Moscow artisan. Her name was Avdotya Ivanov, and when in May 1842 she bore Turgenev a daughter, the child was christened by the very humble name of Pelageya, which was to become Pauline ten years later when Turgenev sent her off to France to be brought up with Pauline Viardot's children. When her condition became known, Varvara Petrovna drove her out of Spasskoye and Turgenev engaged rooms for her in Moscow and settled an annual allowance on her. At the time this prosaic love affair had little influence on Turgenev, but it was to play a great part in his life later on. His transcendental love affair with Tatyana, who was twenty-seven at the time, probably began soon after his return from Berlin. He met her first in Moscow and in October 1841 he paid a visit to Pryamukhino, the Bakunin family estate, where he stayed for a week. He spent Christmas with the Bakunin family at their country house. He also met her at the estate of Tatyana's close friends. They must have exchanged many lofty Hegelian sentiments while, as Turgenev put it in one of his letters to her, 'walking hand in hand in the long, long lime-tree avenue, feeling how our souls merged into one and how everything that was alien to us, everything that gave us pain, everything that was mean and vengeful, was melting away for ever.'

Tatyana was not to be outdone in her protestations of sacred love. 'Christ was my first love,' she declared in a letter to Turgenev. 'How often, kneeling before His Cross, did I weep and pray to Him. You, my friend, will be my last, my everlastingly true and

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

everlastingly sacred love.' But when Michel, perturbed by the news of his favourite sister's affair with his friend, expressed the wish in a New Year message to her that Turgenev should only be 'her brother and her friend' she at once reassured him. 'You know very well,' she wrote to Michel, 'that the man I could love and who could fill all my heart, exists only in my imagination. Perhaps, I shall only meet him in heaven.' But she must soon have realised to her horror that she had been swept away by a passion that she could not control and sometimes, she confessed to Turgenev, she was 'ready to hate him' for having gained such a power over her. So it went on for almost two years. In the end, though still only his 'sister' and his 'friend', her love-sick ecstasies made her ill and she was sent to Moscow for medical treatment. She stayed at her aunt's and Turgenev came to see her and sent her 'touching and agitated' letters in German, full of lofty sentiments, but by that time he must not only have got heartily sick of the whole business, but grown to hate everything that smacked of German idealist philosophy. Ten years later, in his story *A Correspondence*, he asked himself the question why Tatyana and he had never reached 'the longed-for shore'. His answer, of which he must have become aware already in the winter of 1842, was: 'Because a lie was our constant companion; because it poisoned our best feelings; because everything in us was artificial and affected; because we did not love each other at all but only endeavoured to love, imagined that we were in love with one another.'

In his last letter to Tatyana, written towards the end of 1842, Turgenev did his best to soften the blow of their parting. He was leaving Moscow for Petersburg in order to enter the civil service and he felt that he could not go without saying 'a cordial word' to her. 'We have become such strangers to one another,' he wrote, 'that I don't know if you will understand the reason which made me take up my pen.' He himself, he explained, was at a loss to understand 'that strange affair between you and me'. He assured her that he was not parting from her for ever. 'I shall see you again—my good, my beautiful sister. I swear', he went on, 'that I'm speaking the truth, that I'm telling you what I think and what I know: I never loved any woman more than you, though I did not love even you with a profound and abiding love. I could not be gay and

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

talkative with you as I was with others because I loved you more than anyone: that is why I am so certain that you alone will understand me. It is for you alone that I wished to be a poet, for you with whom my soul is bound up in such an ineffably wonderful way that I almost do not feel the need to see you.' And after such a truly metaphysical declaration of love he ends his letter with a long and ecstatic passage in German, which is so typical of the insincere and turgid sentiments which were current among the Russian Hegelians that it deserves to be quoted in full. '*Ihre Gestalt,*' he concluded his letter, '*Ihr Wesen ist immer in mir lebendig, ver-aendert sich und waechst und nimmt neue Gestalte an, wie ein Proteus: Sie sind meine Muse: so hat sich zum B. die Gestalt der Serafine aus dem Gedanken an Sie entwickelt, wie auch die der Inez, der Donna Anna vielleicht—was sag'ich vielleicht—alles was ich denke und erfinde, ist auf eine wunderbare Weise mit Ihnen verknuepft.*

'*Leben Sie wohl, meine Schwester; geben Sie mir Ihren Segen auf die Reise—and bauen Sie auf mich—bis jetzt noch—wie auf einen stummen Felsen, dem aber im innersten steinernem Herzen wahre Liebe und Ruehrung verschlossen ist.*

'*Leben Sie wohl; ich bin tief geruehrt und erschuettert:—leben Sie wohl, meine beste, einzige Freundin. —Auf Wiedersehen.*¹

Turgeneff.

But it was not to be *Auf Wiedersehen*—Turgenev never met her again. 'The reasons which forced me to break off my relations with your family,' he wrote to Alexey Bakunin four years later, 'were quite natural; thinking it over, I believe you will agree with me. . . . Sometimes it grieves me to think that you might be drawing wrong conclusions about me, though I felt myself that you had a perfect right to do so. But during the last few years I have no longer lived

¹ 'Your form, your whole being lives in me always, changes and grows and takes on new forms like a Proteus: you are my Muse: so has, for instance, Serafina's form developed from my thought of you, as well as that of Inez, of Donna Anna perhaps [all apparently characters from his poetic dramas which he afterwards destroyed]—why do I say perhaps—everything I think of and invent is connected with you in a wonderful manner.

'Goodbye my sister; give me your blessing on my journey—and build on me—even now—as on a dumb rock within whose innermost stone heart love and emotion are locked.

'Goodbye; I am deeply moved and shattered—goodbye, my best, my only friend. *Auf Wiedersehen.*'

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

on my imagination as before, but in a more realistic manner, and that is why I had no time to think about something that had in every way become a thing of the past with me.' And he concludes his letter characteristically by wishing his correspondent 'to go forward courageously on your way not in order to obtain any spiritual benefits, such as truth or knowledge, but in order to preserve to the end an energetic feeling of human dignity without which life is very nasty and unpleasant'.

His affair with Tatyana, however, did not become a thing of the past with him until some time later: it had left too bitter a taste in his mouth. He refers to it many times in his works, sometimes indirectly and sometimes directly, as the passage quoted from *A Correspondence* shows. He did more. In *Tatyana Borisovna and her Nephew*—one of his stories from *The Diary of a Sportsman*, written in 1848, that is to say, three years after his last letter to Alexey Bakunin—he drew a ruthlessly candid portrait of Tatyana who is introduced anonymously as 'an old maid of thirty-eight, a most kindhearted creature, but all twisted up inside, affected and ecstatic'. One day she comes to visit the middle-aged heroine of the story, 'in a long dress, a hat on her head, a green veil, and freely flowing tresses.' She eludes the boy servant in the hall, who mistakes her for 'a water nymph', and rushes into the drawing-room, frightening poor Tatyana Borisovna to death. After introducing herself as the sister of the middle-aged lady's friend, she declares that she heard so much of her that she simply had to come and get acquainted with her. Then she takes off her hat and with a toss of her curls takes Tatyana Borisovna's hand. 'And so here she is,' she begins in a voice tremulous with emotion, 'here she is, the good, bright, noble, holy creature! Here she is, this simple and also profound woman! How we shall love one another! Oh, at last I shall find rest!' And gazing soulfully at her astonished hostess, she adds in a whisper, 'That's exactly how I imagined her to be.' When Tatyana Borisovna asks her whether she would like to have tea, she smiles condescendingly and whispers in German, '*Wie wahr, wie unreflectiert!*'

The 'old maid' comes again the following day, stays for hours, talking incessantly, and goes away promising to call every day, for she had set her heart on 'finishing the education' of such 'a rich

Adolescence: The Romantic Period

nature'. Fortunately, she gets 'utterly' disappointed in her friend in a fortnight after falling in love with a young student who spent a few days on her brother's estate and with whom she at once strikes up an 'ardent' correspondence. In her letters she 'naturally' gives him her blessing 'on a beautiful and sacred life', declares her readiness 'to sacrifice herself entirely', demands to be known only as 'his sister' and 'mentions Goethe, Schiller, Bettina and German philosophy'. She finally brings the young man 'to a state of gloomy despair' and one day he wakes up 'with such a frenzied hatred of his sister and best friend in his heart', that he nearly strikes his valet and 'for a long time afterwards almost snarls at the slightest hint of sublime and disinterested love'.

If the undercurrent of bitterness that runs through this sketch is anything to go by at all (and it can be scarcely overlooked), it is very probable that Turgenev, too, woke up one fine morning 'with a frenzied hatred in his heart' for 'his sister and best friend' and, perhaps, even more for his poetic dramas with their Annunziatas, Donna Annas and Serafinas. His romantic period had come to an end with a bang, and it was Tatyana Bakunin he had to thank for it.

PART THREE

‘A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat . . .’

2

Alone among the great Russian writers of his generation Turgenev seems to have possessed the ability, which in him amounted almost to a sixth sense, of foreseeing the emergence of social forces which were to re-shape the destiny of his country and presenting them to his astonished and often resentful countrymen not as ideas but as living men and women. Even more remarkable was his ability to map out his own development as a writer at a time when it still remained a complete mystery to him. In 1843 and 1844 he contributed two long reviews to *Home Annals*, dealing with newly published translations of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* and Goethe's *Faust*. In his first review he looked back on his experiences in Germany, and after noticing 'the absence of the dramatic element in Germans', which, he thought, was proved by 'the pitiable state of their theatre', he defined the German national character as an amalgam of great ability and philistinism. 'Hegel', he wrote with a surprising lack of reverence, 'looked like an ancient Greek and like a self-satisfied cobbler.' In his second review he analyses his own recent romantic period with its curious intermingling of German idealism and, as he himself expressed it, 'the vague and bitter feeling of unrest aroused in us by Lord Byron, that supercilious, attractive, limited and highly gifted nature.' Every man in his youth, he claims in a passage that almost sounds like an apology, goes through a period when he looks upon himself as 'a genius' and as 'the centre of the universe' and when in his overweening egoism he feels that he can 'move mountains, though he is unable or unwilling to shift a straw'. But, he goes on, 'only he

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

deserves to be called a real man who is able to break through this charmed circle and advance further towards his goal.' Turgenev seems to have had no doubts about his own goal which he proceeds to define by drawing a comparison between Schiller and Goethe. Schiller, he argues, was much greater than Goethe as a man and as a citizen, though not as a poet, because he was able 'to express the innermost essence of his people'. And after committing himself to the statement, which Bakunin would most certainly have considered heretical, namely that 'it is impossible to understand anything living by reason alone', he goes on: 'As a poet Goethe has no equal, but it is not only poets we want now: we (and that, too, not entirely, unfortunately) have become like people who at the sight of a beautiful picture depicting a beggar are not able to admire "the artistry of the reproduction", but are sadly perturbed by the thought of the existence of beggars in their midst.' And he makes his point clearer by anticipating by more than ten years the argument he used in *Rudin*: 'A man of genius', he declares, 'is not a cosmopolitan: he belongs to his people and to his age.'

How consistent Turgenev remained to these views will become clear from the following four extracts from his letters written at different periods of his life. In a letter to Botkin on 1 December 1856, he observes that 'the chief fault of our writers is their insufficient contact with reality, that is,' he explains, 'with living people. We read too much,' he goes on, 'and indulge too much in abstract thinking.' Merck¹ says quite rightly: '*Alles (with the ancients) war local, fuer den Moment—und dadurch war das ewig. Wir schreiben ins weite Blaue, fuer alle Menschen und fuer die liebe Nachwelt und eben dadurch fuer Neimand.*'²

'If any of us does pay attention to the *Locale*', Turgenev goes on, 'he immediately tries to give it a general significance, that is to say, a general significance he himself invents—and the result is nonsense.'

Again in a letter to Polonsky on 27 February 1869, Turgenev

¹ Johann Heinrich Merck, a German critic and friend of Goethe, who was Goethe's model for Mephistopheles and whose writings Turgenev greatly admired.

² 'Everything (with the ancients) was local, for the moment, and that is why it has become eternal. We write at random, for everybody, for dear posterity, and just because of that for no one.'

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

makes this important statement: 'All through my career as a writer, I have never taken *ideas* but always *characters* for my starting point.' And in his article *Concerning 'Fathers and Sons'*, published in the same year, Turgenev wrote: 'I must confess that I never attempted to "create a character" if in the first place I had in mind an idea and not a living person, to whom all the appropriate elements were gradually added.' Henry James, in the article he contributed to *The Atlantic Monthly* of January 1884, a few months after Turgenev's death, gives a more comprehensive description of his method as a writer, which reads as though he had heard it all from Turgenev himself. '... the deep purpose pervading them all [Turgenev's works],' he writes, (is) 'to show us life itself. The germ of a story, with him, was never an affair or a plot—that was the last thing he thought of: it was the representation of certain persons. The first form in which it at all appeared to him was as the figure of one individual or a combination of individuals, whom he wished to see in action, being sure that such people must do something very special and interesting. They stood before him, definite, vivid, and he wished to know, and to show, as much as possible of their nature.'

In a letter to a correspondent on 26 December 1875, (the year he first met Henry James), Turgenev wrote: 'You seem to regret that you frequently came across *ideas* which seem to be your own. Now, a true poet [i.e. a creative writer and not poet in the narrow sense the word is usually understood in English usage] who thinks in *characters* would never have felt anything of the kind.'

And, finally, in a letter to Sidney Jerrold, the English translator of his stories *First Love* and *Punin and Baburin*, written on 2 December 1882, Turgenev, after observing that in the two stories he had reproduced a great deal from his own life, writes: 'Generally speaking, I always lean against the facts provided for me by life in my works, merely trying as much as possible to raise accidental phenomena into types.'

These statements, however, do not imply that Turgenev was a realist pure and simple. 'Truth', he wrote to Polonsky in January, 1869, 'is the air without which we cannot breathe; but art is a plant, sometimes even a rather fantastic one, which grows and develops in this air.' To Botkin he wrote about five years earlier: 'Realism by itself is fatal—truth, however powerful, is not art.'

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

The very first thing he wrote after abandoning his romantic poetic dramas was a long narrative poem in which the characteristic features of his later works are already discernible. But before that he decided—with all the optimism of a twenty-four-year-old idealist who turns to practical affairs—to see what could be done to induce the Russian government to make the lot of the serfs easier and their treatment more humane.

Varvara Petrovna never really relished the thought of his becoming a professor, and as for his literary pre-occupations, she summed up her view in one sentence: *écrivain ou gratte-papier est tout un*.¹ After Nicholas's *mésalliance*, all her hopes were now centred on Turgenev. She wanted him to marry, enter the civil service and become a successful State official. Turgenev humoured her by agreeing to enter the civil service, but did not tell her of his grandiose plan to undermine her power over her serfs. He got a job at the Ministry of the Interior in the department of Vladimir Dal, the famous Russian lexicographer, and at once set about preparing a memorandum in which he proposed several radical changes in the economic structure of the country. By 24 December 1842, he had his memorandum ready and submitted it to his superiors. That was all he ever heard of it.

Like his relative Nicholas Turgenev, a leader of the Decemberist conspiracy Turgenev did not advocate the outright abolition of serfdom: that would have damned his proposals outright and might have involved him in serious trouble as well. What he did was to plead that serfdom not only oppressed the peasant, but had also a most pernicious effect on the whole agricultural economy of the country; for it encouraged absenteeism in the rich landowner and ignorance of the elementary principles of agriculture in the poorer landowner. Besides, the vagueness of the legal position of the peasants emboldened the landowners to disregard all existing laws, and particularly the recently published decree enjoining them to apportion strips of land to their more deserving serfs. It also forced the peasant to fall back on cunning and double-dealing as his only weapon against his oppressors. Moreover, his insecure economic position made him heedless and neglectful of his responsibilities and drove him to seek solace in drink. (This was especially true of the Spass-

¹ A writer and a pen-pusher is all one.

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

koye peasants and was a constant source of embarrassment and worry to Turgenev. In a letter to a correspondent in March 1877, Turgenev wrote: 'In the vicinity of my estate, where there are no large villages, there are eleven pubs within a radius of about five miles and it is very easy to visit them all in one day.') Having pointed out all this, he proceeded to deal a shrewd blow against the arrogant assumptions of the Russian nobility by claiming that they were not such great aristocrats as, for instance, the English noblemen, who, he wrote, were the descendants of the free Norman knights who had accompanied William the Conqueror to England and who, like the King of England, were aristocrats 'by the grace of God' and not, like the Russian noblemen, servants of the Czar, who had the power of life and death over them as well as over his other subjects. The rights and powers of the Russian nobility were therefore of an inferior nature and hence—the implication seemed clear, though it was left unstated—their absolute authority over the peasants, who, unlike the villeins in England, were of the same blood and spoke the same language as their masters, was entirely arbitrary and unjust. This led Turgenev to draw the conclusion, that in view of their historic origin the Russian noblemen like the peasants, ought to cultivate the land (a conclusion he makes Lavretsky, the hero of *A Nobleman's Nest*, act upon). He further insisted that in view of the vastness of the country, there ought to be 'a great number of cultivators of land in Russia. The whole agricultural life of the country', he stated emphatically, 'must be radically changed, and in this slow and gradual, but sweeping, change all the noblemen must take part, since the whole future of Russia depends on it.'

Turgenev was no politician, for had he been one he would not have bothered to write such a memorandum, nor indeed any of the other memoranda he subsequently submitted to Alexander II. Many years later he admitted both to Herzen and to Countess Lambert that politics only interested him inasmuch as he found them useful as a writer 'who is called upon to depict contemporary life'. But for all that he could never refrain from taking an active, and sometimes rather dangerous, part in politics, for intellectually he was a fighter who never admitted the defeat of his most cherished convictions, which, as he confessed to Countess Lambert, had 'not changed since

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

my young days'. The 'slow and gradual' change he advocated in his first memorandum to the Russian authorities remained his policy for the rest of his life, and it was this policy that made him so unpopular both with the right-wing and the left-wing political parties.

2

It was while drafting his memorandum for the rehabilitation of the economy of his country that Turgenev wrote the poem that was to launch him on his literary career in good earnest. Its title—*Parasha*—a homely Russian name so different from the Italian and Spanish names he gave the heroines of his poetic dramas—at once proclaimed the final break with his romantic past. The hero of the poem, too, was 'not remarkable' in any way, but just 'an ordinary fellow'. The whole poem, indeed, deals with quite ordinary people and tells of a very ordinary love affair ending in a most conventional marriage. Its diction is extremely simple, though here and there traces of Turgenev's Byronic past are still discernible.

The poem is remarkable for its large number of autobiographical references, some of them veiled, others set out with no wish of concealment, which were to become such a distinguishing feature of his fiction.

Already at the very beginning of the poem there is an unmistakable reference to Tatyana Bakunin: 'I do not like ecstatic young ladies. . . . I dislike their pale, round faces. . . .' This is followed by a reference to his mother and her dislike of Russian verses which 'are not read in respectable homes', just as *kvas* is not drunk there; a reminiscence of a summer's day in Italy; a reflection on 'the fruitless words and the many doubts' he had brought back from Germany; a confession of his predilection for high society for which his literary friends could not forgive him; and a description of 'the sad old park' at Spasskoye, where as a boy he used to gaze at the ripples on the pond 'beneath the weeping willow' and to wander in the tall grass of the overgrown paths, 'dreaming of a nonpareil lady'.

It was the great simplicity of the theme and language of *Parasha* that made Belinsky hail it as 'one of the most remarkable productions of Russian poetry of 1843' and its author as 'undoubtedly

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

possessing an original talent'. The whole poem, the critic thought, expressed 'a true and profound idea taken from Russian life and developed in a masterly fashion in all its smallest details'. When Belinsky's friends drew his attention to Turgenev's extravagant behaviour in society, his reply was: 'Turgenev wrote *Parasha* and empty-headed people do not write such things.'

Parasha was instrumental in bringing about Turgenev's close friendship with Belinsky, which survived the critic's disappointment with the poetry Turgenev went on writing prolifically during the next few years. He wrote a great number of small lyrics as well as two more long narrative poems, *The Landowner* and *Andrey*.

The Landowner is particularly interesting because it contains Turgenev's first attack on Konstantin Aksakov, the elder son of Sergey Aksakov. Konstantin Aksakov was one of the chief leaders of the Slavophiles, who preached the erection of a sort of spiritual Chinese wall round Russia and sought the economic salvation of their vast country in the primitive agricultural commune of the Russian peasants and the no less primitive co-operative associations of Russian handicraftsmen. Turgenev described Konstantin Aksakov in his poem as 'that clever Muscovite, fat and flabby, with a prominent Adam's apple, wearing long hair and a coachman's *caftan*, who raves about old Russian palaces and ancient Russian princes, expects regeneration from his skullcap, eats turnips, curses the peoples of Western Europe and—sends denunciations to the police'. Konstantin Aksakov wore what he imagined to be Russian national dress, including a velvet skullcap. He dressed so nationally, a Moscow wit observed, that the peasants in the streets of Moscow took him for a Persian. It is only fair to add that after he had got to know Konstantin Aksakov more intimately, Turgenev, while remaining a bitter opponent of the Slavophiles, was sorry he had written those lines and insisted that they should be excised from a new edition of the poem.

In *Parasha*, as well as in *The Landowner* and *Andrey*, the characters are discussed rather than created, and that is one of the reasons that made Turgenev condemn his poetry as 'so pitifully second-rate that it can only be compared to dirty, tepid water', and refuse to have it republished in his lifetime. 'My dislike of my verses', he wrote in June 1875 to a Russian literary critic who had asked per-

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

mission to reprint his poems, 'is amply explained by the ancient: "... *Mediocribus esse poetis non di, non homines* ..." etc.' Many years later he wrote that all his friends knew that the best way to make him really angry was to recite his poetry to him.

But that of course was not Turgenev's attitude to his poetry in the early forties. He published *Parasha* at his own expense, signing it with the initials T.L. (Turgenev-Lutovinov) and before leaving for Spasskoye in April 1843, left a copy of it with Belinsky whom he had met only twice before. In Spasskoye he spent most of his time shooting, and when at last the May number of *Home Annals* arrived with Belinsky's article on *Parasha*, he felt transported. 'Those lines', he said afterwards, 'increased my powers tenfold. I was ready to love the whole world, and especially Belinsky. I vowed to become his friend, his disciple.' At the same time, as he confesses in his *Reminiscences of Belinsky*, he felt 'embarrassed rather than glad. . . . I simply could not believe it,' he goes on, 'and when the late Ivan Kireyevsky [one of the leaders of the Slavophiles] came up to me in Moscow with his congratulations, I hastened to disown my own child and told him that I was not the author of *Parasha*.' (In a letter to one of his publishers describing his first meetings with Belinsky, published in 1860, he declared that he could not recall that article without blushing.)

Varvara Petrovna seems to have been as much pleased with her son's first literary success as Turgenev himself. 'Quite seriously—it's excellent,' she wrote to him after his departure from Spasskoye. 'I haven't read the critics, but! the criticism in *Home Annals* is just and a great deal of it is excellent. I have just been given a dish of wild strawberries. We, country folk, love everything that is real. And so your *Parasha*, your story, your poem . . . smells of wild strawberries.' She changed her tune, however, after Turgenev, disappointed with the failure of his memorandum to produce any effect on the authorities and annoyed at the constant reprimands he received from Vladimir Dal for always being late at the office, resigned his post at the Ministry of the Interior with the idea of devoting himself entirely to literature. She cut down his allowance and quite often did not send him any money at all, and Turgenev found himself in the humiliating position of having to borrow money from his friends while keeping up the pretence of being a

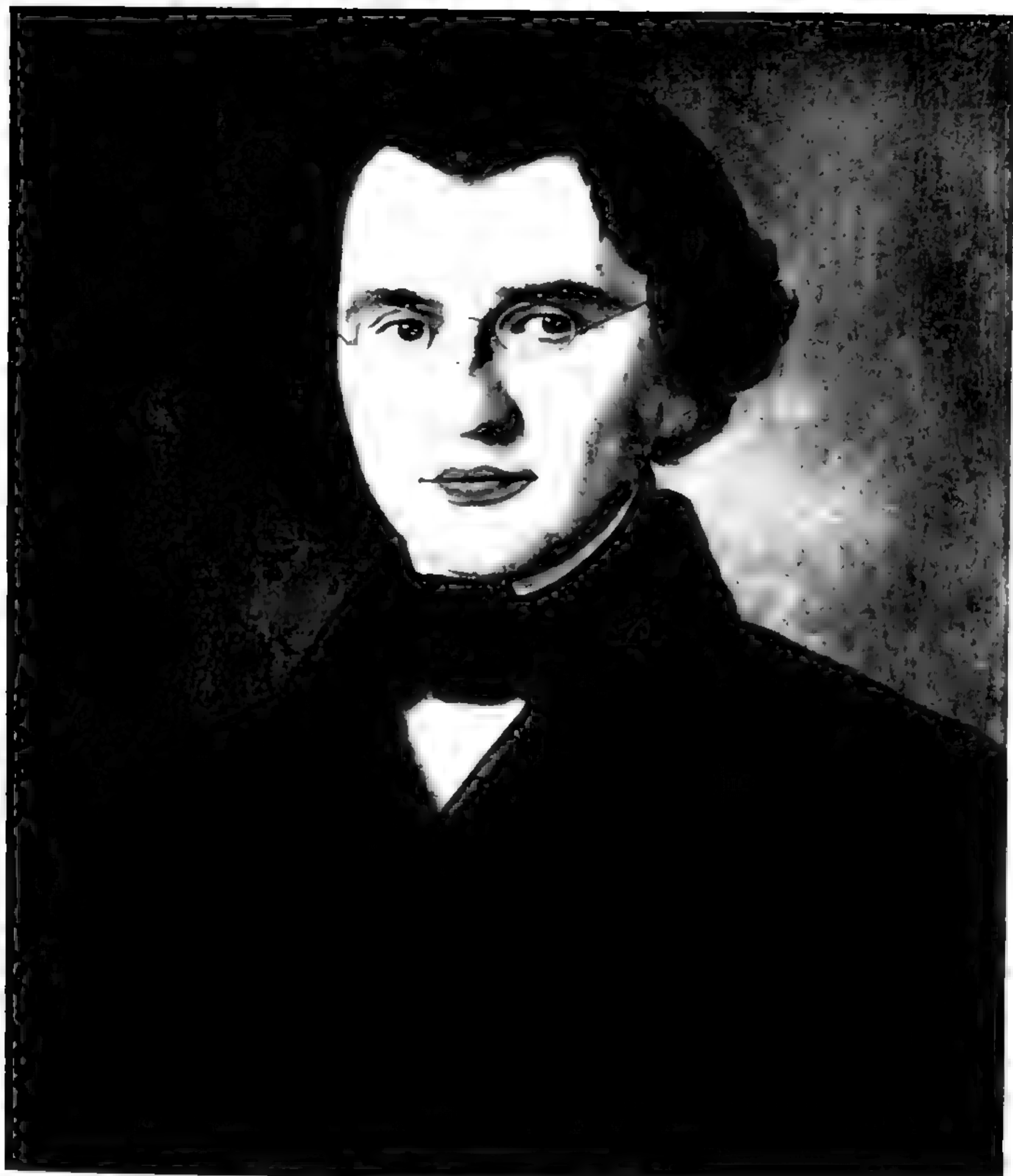
'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

rich man. He lived on the fourth floor of a huge house and his rooms often remained unheated because he could not afford to buy logs. There were times when he could not afford a cup of tea, let alone a bottle of wine, for a friend.

'After his resignation from the Civil Service,' Annenkov records, 'Turgenev went back to his old habits of trying to be original at all costs and playing for effect.' He cultivated a cocksureness of speech, a contempt for truth, a habit of extending invitations to dinner and then being unaccountably away from home, a boastfulness that was incommensurate with his inability to meet the most modest expense, and quite a miraculous genius for vanishing and leaving his friends to pay the bill at an expensive restaurant. It was at this time, too, that he first began writing biting epigrams on his literary friends, which the young Dostoevsky ascribed to jealousy—and never forgot or forgave. (In his farce *No Money*, published in *Home Annals* in 1846, Turgenev describes some of his own humiliating experiences in Petersburg at the time.)

It was only with Belinsky that Turgenev was able to be his natural self. 'Turgenev', Belinsky wrote to Botkin in the spring of 1843, 'is a good man and I find it easy to make friends with him. There is malice in him, gall and humour; he has a profound understanding of Moscow, and represents it so wonderfully that I am transported with pleasure. . . . He is an extraordinarily intelligent man. My talks and arguments with him were a great comfort to me. . . . It is nice to meet a man whose original and characteristic ideas produce sparks as they strike against yours. . . . He certainly understands Russia. In all his opinions one discerns character and reality. He is an enemy of everything vague and indeterminate.'

It was no doubt Belinsky's appreciation of Turgenev's true character beneath the veneer of a self-opinionated man of the world that appealed so much to the younger man. (Turgenev was 25 and Belinsky 32 at the time of their first meetings.) He never wavered in his respect for and veneration of Belinsky. 'Everything that reminds me of Belinsky is dear to me,' he wrote to the playwright Alexander Ostrovsky in November 1856, eight years after the critic's death. 'I am glad', he wrote to Tolstoy ten days later, 'that Belinsky's name is at last spoken of with respect.' Four years later he wrote to Herzen: 'Your mention of my name in the company of Belinsky



Ivan Turgenev, aged 25



Alexander Herzen



Visarion Belinsky

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

pleased me just as if I had been given the order of St-Anne first class.' He dedicated *Fathers and Sons* to Belinsky and when, as late as February 1877, he received a letter from a correspondent whose handwriting reminded him of Belinsky's, his heart, he wrote, began beating fast with excitement.

In his *Reminiscences of Belinsky*, first published in the *European Herald* in 1869, Turgenev uses three English phrases to characterise him as a critic. 'He was', he writes, 'what the English call "*the right man in the right place . . .*" he was always, as the English say, "*in earnest*" . . . and, finally, he was "*a good hater*".' What he also admired in Belinsky was his 'unerring aesthetic sense', his 'ability to read between the lines' and to recognise a problem that was of 'immediate importance'. Belinsky, Turgenev claims, was 'an idealist in the best sense of the word', and everything he denounced was in the name of his ideal of progress, and civilisation. Another strong bond that linked Turgenev with Belinsky was that both of them were out-and-out Westerners.

The two men met frequently during the summer of 1843 and during the following three years. Of the summer which the two spent in the country near Petersburg, Turgenev writes: 'It was a beautiful summer, and Belinsky and I used to take long walks in the pine woods. . . . We used to sit down on the soft dry moss, covered with thin pine needles and . . . discuss all sorts of subjects, mostly literary and philosophic. . . . I had only recently returned from Berlin, where I had studied the philosophy of Hegel, and Belinsky bombarded me with questions, listened, argued, developed his own ideas—and he did it all with a sort of avidity, with a sort of insatiable thirst for truth.' In winter Turgenev went to see Belinsky 'in his cheerless, damp rooms', where they continued their discussions of the meaning of life, the relations of people towards each other and towards God, the origin of the world, the immortality of the soul, and so on. 'It was a most distressing time,' Turgenev wrote. 'Let the reader judge for himself: in the morning you might perhaps have your proofs returned, defaced and mutilated with [the censor's] ink, just as though they had been stained with blood; you might even have to pay a visit to the censor himself and, having offered him your vain and humiliating explanations, listen to his peremptory and often derisive verdict. . . . One censor, particu-

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

larly, excelled himself at these meetings, the one who used to say to me, "My dear fellow, I promise you not to touch a single letter, I shall merely kill the spirit." One day he said to me, looking with feeling into my eyes, "You don't want me to cross anything out, do you? But, my dear sir, just think: if I don't cross out I may lose 3,000 roubles a year, but if I do, no one will be the worse for it." . . . You look round,' Turgenev continued, 'bribery is flourishing, serfdom stands firm as a rock, the barracks are always there in the foreground, justice is unknown, rumours of the closing down of the universities are rife and are partially confirmed when the news leaks out that the complement of students at each university is to be reduced to three hundred, journeys abroad are forbidden, no decent book can be ordered from abroad, a sort of black cloud hangs over everything that can be called learning or literature, and spies are everywhere. There is no common bond among the younger people, nor have they any common interests—no ray of light anywhere. So you pay a call on Belinsky, you meet a few friends there, you start talking and you feel a little better. Our talks', Turgenev explained, 'were mostly on forbidden subjects, but we never engaged in any purely political discussions: the uselessness of such discussions in those days was too obvious to everyone. The general trend of our discussions bore a philosophic-literary, a critical-aesthetic, and perhaps social, though rarely historical, character.'

After talking uninterruptedly for two or three hours, Turgenev began to think of going for a walk, of having dinner, and Belinsky's wife, too, tried to persuade her husband to stop their discussion for a while, reminding him of his doctor's orders—but it was not so easy to persuade Belinsky. 'We haven't yet solved the question of the existence of God, and you want to eat!' he said to Turgenev once with bitter reproach.

Though not more than seven years his senior, Belinsky treated Turgenev like a fond parent who cannot help admiring his son's brilliance but is at the same time outraged by his 'silly pranks' and his 'frivolity'. 'Though I may be a "street urchin", as you say, and a frivolous fellow generally,' Turgenev wrote to Belinsky in September 1847, a short time before the critic's death, 'I am capable of loving good people and forming an enduring attachment to them.' Three years later, when working on his mainly autobiographical

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

story *A Correspondence*, Turgenev wrote: 'I feel ashamed and disgusted when I remember how I used to let my vanity run wild.' It was not so much his vanity as his reaction against his mother's domineering character (and perhaps, too, his desire to show Varvara Petrovna that, though she deprived him of funds, he was able to mix with the society people she so admired) that made him lead the life of a man-about-town when he could least afford it. As the heir to a great fortune he did not hesitate to borrow money or take large advances from editors.

While behaving to Belinsky rather as a schoolboy would behave towards a stern schoolmaster, Turgenev was not averse from pulling his leg occasionally. One Good Friday, Panayev records, Belinsky, who was very fond of Preference, a new card game which had become very popular at the time, played cards for three solid hours till, feeling exhausted, he went into the next room for a rest. Turgenev immediately took advantage of his absence to select him a hand that was sure to lose him four tricks, though it looked certain to win him eight. 'Belinsky came back', Panayev writes, 'snatched up his cards, and beamed with delight. He bid eight in spades and, as was to be expected, lost four tricks. Flinging down his cards on the table, he cried, gasping for breath, "Such a thing could only happen to me!" Turgenev felt sorry for him and told him that he had merely played a joke on him. At first Belinsky didn't believe him, but when we all confirmed it, he gave Turgenev a look of inexpressible reproach and, turning white as a sheet, said, "I wish you'd never told me that. I'd thank you not to play such jokes on me in future!"'

'Belinsky', Turgenev wrote, 'was a genuinely passionate and a genuinely sincere man' and there was something endearingly childish in the way his passion and sincerity revealed themselves even in an innocent game of cards. That was infinitely moving to so sensitive a man as Turgenev, who, though improvident and 'frivolous', was an experienced man of the world compared with a recluse like Belinsky.

3

It was in the summer of 1843 that Turgenev—as a relaxation from his philosophic talks with Belinsky—had his affair with the miller's wife (according to a malicious version left by Mrs. Panayev, Turgenev's mistress was the wife of a priest) which he recalled with such feeling twenty-nine years later, on 2 March 1872, at the dinner given to him, Edmond de Goncourt and Théophile Gautier by Flaubert. Turgenev, according to Goncourt, began by declaring that he was 'saturated with femininity', that there was no book, nor anything in the world which, for him, could take the place of a woman. 'When a very young man', he went on, 'I had a mistress, a miller's wife, whom I had first met during a shooting expedition in the country near Petersburg. . . . She would not accept anything from me. However, one day she said to me, "You ought to give me a present". "What would you like?" I asked. "Bring me some scented soap from St-Petersburg," she replied. I brought her the soap. She took it, ran off, came back presently and, with cheeks flushed with emotion, murmured, stretching out her lightly scented hands to me, "Kiss my hands as you kiss the hands of your fine ladies in St-Petersburg." I threw myself on my knees', Turgenev concluded, 'and, you know, I don't think I have ever experienced a more exquisite moment in the whole of my life.'

But Turgenev was soon to experience something deeper than such 'exquisite moments'. So far he had known love but not passion. Within a few months of his affair with the miller's wife he was—as he put it in that long and rambling poem, *A Conversation*, in which he tried to sum up his philosophic talks with Belinsky—'to know passion, cruel passion—to know the power of a young and haughty girl over a devoted heart.' He was to learn the poignant pleasures and torments of a man who was the slave of a woman who never really loved him, the slave of a woman who, besides, was a great artist. Many years later, long after the consuming fire of his great passion had died down to a gentle glow, he wrote to a correspondent who enquired after the progress made by a young singer who was taking lessons from Pauline Viardot: 'Don't call me a cynic, but she is too good a woman to be a great artist; the presence of darkness—

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

der Trueben—lends colour to light, and she is too bright.' Pauline Viardot had plenty of dark colours to set off the brilliance of her genius, as Turgenev was to learn to his cost.

4

'The critics do not generally have quite the right conception of what is going on in an author's mind, of what his joys and sorrows, his aims, his successes and failures consist,' Turgenev wrote in his essay *Concerning 'Fathers and Sons'*. 'They do not, for instance, even suspect the delight, mentioned by Gogol, he feels in castigating himself and his shortcomings in the fictitious characters he creates. . . . They refuse to believe that there is no greater happiness for a writer than to reproduce the truth and reality of life even if that truth does not always agree with his convictions.'

This 'delight in self-castigation' led Turgenev to reproduce his own experiences with an amazing exactness of detail, though he often disguised them either by endowing his characters with different physical peculiarities or by placing them in a different social environment. In *A Correspondence*, written just when he was about to quit Pauline Viardot's country house Courtavenel in 1850, he gives a semi-fictitious reconstruction of his life during and immediately after his first fateful meeting with the great opera singer.

Pauline Viardot was twenty-two at the time. She came from a family of famous singers. Her father, Manuel Garcia, who was born in the gipsy quarter of Seville, was a celebrated tenor and a professor of singing. Her mother—Joaquina Stiches—was also a singer of outstanding ability, and so were her brother and elder sister. After spending some years in the United States and Mexico, her family settled in Paris in 1829, when her musical and general education began. She first appeared on the concert stage in Brussels at the age of sixteen, and after singing in Paris and London, had her débüt at the Paris opera in 1839 in the part of Desdemona in Verdi's *Otello*. Her success was instantaneous, for she not only possessed a magnificent voice with an extraordinarily wide register, but was also a brilliant dramatic actress. She was at once engaged by Louis Viardot, the manager of the Paris Italian opera, for the next season. Louis Viardot was a great friend of George Sand, and it was

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

apparently the celebrated novelist who first conceived the idea that a match between the young prima donna, whose love life promised to be even more adventurous than her own, and a middle-aged theatrical manager (Louis was twenty years older than Pauline), who possessed an eminently equable temperament, would be an ideal arrangement. And so it was: Pauline never had any trouble with Louis, who turned out to be a most accommodating husband.

In less than two years Pauline Viardot-Garcia became the most talked-of opera singer in Europe. Alfred de Musset not only dedicated several poems to her, but also made her an offer of marriage. Michelet, a few years later, enshrined her in his *History of the French Revolution*: referring to the altar erected to the goddess of reason in Notre-Dame during the French revolution, he wrote: 'If in our own time we had chosen Pauline Viardot for our goddess, would not that have been wonderful?' Berlioz declared her talent to be perfect and infinitely varied. And George Sand hailed her as one of the great miracles of creation.

When she arrived in Petersburg for the 1843-1844 season of the Italian opera, which had just then been revived, she was already one of the most celebrated prima donnas in Europe. And this is Turgenev's own version of what his meeting with her meant to him: '. . . Something happened to me which I can truly describe as having had a most powerful influence on the whole of my life,' he wrote in his short story, *A Correspondence*, in which he disguised her as a ballerina and himself as a young man in the last stages of consumption. 'I went to the theatre to see the ballet . . . and I fell in love with a dancer. This was all the more strange as it was impossible to call her a beauty. . . . From the very first moment I saw her I was entirely hers. I belonged to her just as a dog belongs to his master. . . . To tell the truth, she scarcely noticed me—she never really cared for me. . . . But I could not take my eyes off her face. . . . Love', Turgenev sums up his experience, 'is not even a feeling; it is a disease, a certain state of mind and body, it does not develop gradually; it is impossible to be in any doubt about it, it is impossible to try to be clever about it. . . . It usually takes hold of a man without asking, suddenly, against his will—just as if it were a fever or cholera. . . . There is no equality in love, there is none of the so-called free union of souls and other idealist clap-trap invented in

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

their leisure hours by the German philosophers. In love,' Turgenev concludes, reiterating the statement he had made in his poem *A Conversation*, 'one partner is a slave and the other an absolute master, and the poets do not talk idly of the chains imposed by love. Yes, love is a chain—the heaviest chain of all. I, at least, have arrived at that conclusion, and I arrived at it by way of experience, I bought it at the cost of my life, because I am dying a slave.'

This extract gives a most precise description of the nature of Turgenev's love for Pauline Viardot, but it omits an essential part of it—namely the powerful attraction Pauline Viardot's art exercised over him. Turgenev had an overpowering passion for music. His ear was so fine that the slightest jarring note caused him physical suffering. He remembered every detail of Pauline Viardot's extensive repertoire and her singing would sometimes drive him into such an uncontrollable state of excitement that he would jump up from his seat and start humming and gesticulating—and that would happen when he was already an old man and after Pauline Viardot had lost her voice. The extraordinary influence of Pauline Viardot's art on Turgenev will perhaps be more easily understood from a description Heinrich Heine left of it.

Heine, too, found that Pauline Viardot was not beautiful. Indeed, he described her as ugly—*haesslich*—but, he wrote in his second article on the Paris musical season of 1844, 'her ugliness is of a kind that is noble and, I might almost say, beautiful, such as sometimes enchanted and inspired the great lion-painter Delacroix. Indeed,' Heine goes on, 'the Garcia recalls to your mind not so much the civilised beauty and tame grace of our European homeland as the terrible splendour of an exotic wilderness, and during some moments of her impassioned performances, especially when she opens wide her large mouth with its dazzling white teeth and smiles with such savage sweetness and delightful ferocity, you feel as though the monstrous plants and animals of India or Africa were about to appear before your eyes, as though giant palms festooned with thousands of blossoming lianas were shooting up—and you would not be surprised if a leopard or a giraffe, or even a herd of young elephants were to stampede across the stage.'

Turgenev himself, in one of his *Poems in Prose*, written in November 1879, recaptures the ecstasy he used to feel as 'the last in-

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

spired sound' escaped Pauline Viardot's lips and her eyes no longer blazed, but were extinguished, weighed down by 'the blissful consciousness' of the beauty she had succeeded in capturing. 'There is no other immortality', he exclaims, 'and I ask for no other. For at this moment you are immortal. It will pass,' he goes on, 'and once again you are a speck of dust, a woman, a child. But what do you care? At this moment you are higher than any transient, any temporal thing—you are a thing apart. This is *your* moment and it will never pass.' He concludes by imploring her to let him share in her immortality. 'Drop', he begs, 'into my soul the reflection of your eternity.' Ironically enough, it was he who let her share in his immortality.

The contemporary records merely confirm Turgenev's own account of his first impression of Pauline Viardot and her complete disregard of him. Mrs. Panayev declares that she never saw such a 'vociferous' lover as Turgenev. 'He proclaimed his love for Viardot in a loud voice everywhere and to everybody,' she writes, 'and never spoke of anything else among his friends.' One evening, she records, Turgenev rushed into her drawing-room in a kind of frenzy. 'I'm so happy today', he declared, 'that I'm sure there is not a happier man in the world.' When Botkin pressed him to tell them what had made him so happy, he said that he had had a headache and Viardot herself had dabbed some eau-de-cologne on his forehead. Belinsky, exasperated by the way Turgenev's excitement had interfered with his game of Preference, exclaimed angrily, 'Really, how is one to believe in such noisy protestations of love as yours!' As he was absolutely penniless at the time, he had to avail himself of an upper-circle box taken for the Italian opera season by Mrs. Panayev and his other literary friends. 'The box', Mrs. Panayev writes, 'was already crowded and Turgenev's huge bulk took up a lot of room. But he would push his way to the front and sit down unceremoniously, while those who had paid for the box had to stand behind his broad back unable to see what was going on on the stage. And that was not all: Turgenev applauded so fiercely and expressed his enthusiasm for Viardot's singing in so loud a voice that the people in the next box began to complain.'

All these stories have more than a grain of truth in them. Before going through the filter of his mind, which was a very slow process

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

with him, Turgenev's private life was displayed to the gaze of his friends in a somewhat exaggerated and ridiculous light. His true feelings he kept to himself. Only in one short lyric poem, written in December 1843, does he reveal them; in it, he speaks of the 'mute sufferings' he had gone through when 'in the stillness of the night' Pauline Viardot's 'sweet and passionate' voice haunted him, while his 'soul rushed madly to her feet' as 'the waves of the sea hurry along to inaccessible shores'.

5

Turgenev first saw Pauline Viardot in the part of Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*. He tried very hard to get an introduction to her, but it was only after he had met her husband at the house of a friend that he succeeded. He met her for the first time on 1 November 1843.

Pauline Viardot used to say jokingly that Turgenev had been introduced to her as a young landowner, a very intellectual conversationalist and a bad poet. Seven years later he wrote to her: 'Today [26 October 1850] is exactly seven years since I met your husband at Major Komarov's. Do you remember that absurd individual? Next Tuesday will be seven years since I first called on you. . . . I am glad to tell you that I haven't met anyone better than you in the whole world, that to fall in love with you was the greatest good fortune of my life, and that my gratitude to you has no limits and will only die with me. . . . You're everything that is best and noblest in the whole world.' On the seventh anniversary of their first meeting, he wrote to her again from Petersburg: 'I went today to have a look at the house where seven years ago I had the good fortune of talking to you. This house is on Nevsky Avenue, opposite the Alexandrinsky Theatre; your flat was at the very corner—do you remember? In all my life I have no dearer memories than those connected with you. I am happy that my feelings towards you are as deep, as true and as unchanged as they were seven years ago.' Two years later, on 1 November 1852, he wrote to her from Spasskoye, where he was living under house arrest: 'Another anniversary, and do you know which? Today is exactly nine years since I met you for the first time in Petersburg. . . . I remember that visit as though

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

it happened yesterday. It was in the morning. I did not come alone, I had little Major Komarov with me. . . . And, fancy, in spite of the comical appearance of that individual, I always think of him with pleasure; his figure arouses many thoughts and memories in my mind. . . . I feel now the impressions of that season coming back to me. Nine years! Alas, ten years will pass and I shall have as little hope of seeing you again as I have now.'

Turgenev was almost every day at Pauline Viardot's apartments but, surrounded by her many high-placed and influential admirers, she took hardly any notice of him. The way he compensated himself for her disregard of him is characteristic; he wrote his first play in prose—*Carelessness*—a cloak and dagger drama in the style parodied by Prosper Mérimée. Its action takes place in Spain and its characters are all Spaniards: Donna Dolores, a beautiful young married woman, her husband Don Balthazar, who is twenty years older than she; Don Raphael, a handsome young man, who is three years older than she (Turgenev was only three years older than Pauline Viardot-Garcia); her husband's friend, Don Pablo Sangre, a middle-aged man who is infatuated with her and kills her in the end; and Margarita, a scheming old servant. Here are a few of the more significant autobiographical lines in the play: a reminiscence from Turgenev's early childhood, when he used to snare birds: 'You never caught birds, put out snares, spread nets'; 'I confess to you frankly,' Don Raphael says to Donna Dolores, 'I am a frivolous fellow, and, as they say, a dissolute one'—the exact adjectives which Belinsky applied to Turgenev; 'Your husband is a most excellent and most worthy gentleman,' Don Pablo says to Donna Dolores, 'but he is no longer young; and you, you are still young, and it is therefore not surprising that you should sometimes give yourself up to dreams which are not always permissible, but are unavoidable.' 'If only you knew your power over me,' Don Raphael says to Donna Dolores, and it is as though Turgenev himself were saying this to Pauline Viardot, if only you knew what a change you have suddenly wrought in me!' And at the very beginning of the play he tells her: 'Señora, I love you—love you? No! I am passionately, desperately in love with you. You took no notice of me, but I myself did my best not to be noticed by you—I was afraid to arouse your husband's suspicions of you and me.'

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

Pauline Viardot returned to Petersburg in the winter of 1844-45 for her second season at the Italian opera, and Turgenev had to go through the same humiliating experience of being totally ignored by her. According to Mrs. Panayev, he spent most of his time in Louis Viardot's room, exchanging hunting stories with him, while Pauline entertained the cream of Petersburg society, including Stepan Gedeonov, the son of the Director of the Imperial Theatres, to whom she seemed to be particularly nice. Turgenev has even been accused of writing his damning review of Gedeonov's historical play—a second-rate product of the 'pseudo-sublime' school—because he was jealous of him.

In February 1845 Turgenev went abroad ostensibly because he wished to consult an eye specialist. From the letter he wrote to Alexey Bakunin on 9 January it would appear that he intended to be away a long time. 'In about two months,' he wrote, 'I shall be leaving Russia—perhaps for a long time; my eyes have grown very bad, and only prolonged treatment can bring me some relief.' But he was back in Petersburg in March: he had followed Pauline Viardot to Paris, had been invited by her for a short stay at Courtavenel, where he was introduced to her family, but was apparently quite unable to break through her indifference. Their correspondence began in 1844. On March 9 of that year, he wrote her a long affectionate letter in which he told her how he had wanted to have a look 'at our little rooms', but could not do it because someone else was living there. After his visit to Courtavenel she stopped writing to him altogether, and he was driven to keep up the slender thread of their acquaintance by writing to her mother. On 21 October 1846, he wrote to her: 'I wonder if you realise how cruel it was of you not to write a single word to me from Courtavenel. I often thought of it this summer. Is the hot-house finished? Have you seen George Sand? Are you composing? Our correspondence, thank God, has been resumed: it will depend on you whether it is to continue.' In reply he got a letter from her and her husband (they were just about to visit Russia again), which he must have found very satisfactory, for on 20 November he wrote to her a long letter in which the following significant sentence occurred: '*Maintenant que la digue est rompue*¹—I intend to inundate you with letters. . . .'

¹ Now that the dam has been breached.

6

Bakunin was no longer in Berlin when Turgenev passed through the Prussian capital in February 1845. After Turgenev's return from Germany four years earlier, Bakunin made up his mind not to return to Russia. He joined the so-called 'left' Hegelians led by Arnold Ruge, in whose periodical *Deutsche Jahrbuecher* he published, in October 1842, his first revolutionary tract, *The German Reaction: Notes by a Frenchman* under the pseudonym of Jules Eliazar, which concluded with the sentence that was to become famous: 'The passion for destruction is a creative passion.' The German police were soon on his track and, borrowing 2,800 thalers from Ruge, he fled to Zurich. Turgenev first learnt of Bakunin's flight to Switzerland from Tatyana, who wrote to ask him to pay Bakunin's debt to Ruge on the understanding that Bakunin's family would refund the money to him later. Turgenev raised the money, although he was himself in financial difficulties, and not only repaid Bakunin's debt, but sent him another 1,000 roubles. In his reply to Tatyana (which has not been preserved) he must have said something that hurt her deeply, for she wrote back accusing Turgenev of wishing to insult her and referring to the 'dry and contemptuous' tone of his letter, which she did not expect from him.

Bakunin himself was far from displeased with Turgenev's break with Tatyana. He knew Turgenev too well, he wrote to his sister, to wish to quarrel with him, adding that if Turgenev had weaknesses, it was the fault of his youth. In a letter to Turgenev he admitted that they had come to a parting of the ways, but he was nevertheless sure, he wrote, that Turgenev would remain his friend. They were never to become the close friends they had been in Berlin, but Turgenev was always ready to help Bakunin even at a time when he strongly dissented from his politics.

On his return from France in 1845, Turgenev devoted himself entirely to literature. He soon gave up writing poetry and for a time was undecided whether he ought not to give up writing altogether. Discussing Belinsky's loss of interest in his poetic efforts, he writes in his *Reminiscences of Belinsky*: 'For my part, I must say that after his first complimentary reference to my literary activities, he very

‘*A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat*’

soon lost interest in them; indeed, he could hardly have been expected to encourage me in writing the verses and poems with which I occupied myself in those days. I soon realised myself that there was no earthly reason why I should carry on with these exercises and made up my mind to give up literature. It was only because of the repeated requests of Ivan Panayev, who badly wanted something for the “Miscellany” section of the first number of the *Contemporary Review*, that I let him have my sketch *Khor and Kalinych* (the words “*From the Diary of a Sportsman*” were added by Panayev in order to win the favour of the readers). The success of the sketch spurred me on to write the others; and I returned to literature.’ There was therefore a certain element of chance in the writing of *The Diary of a Sportsman* though it is questionable whether Turgenev would really have given up literature if *Khor and Kalinych* had not been successful. He had in fact already published three stories—*Andrey Kolosov*, *The Bully* and *Three Portraits*—before he had begun writing the stories of *The Diary of a Sportsman*, but none of them had attracted any particular attention. The first was merely a prose version of *Parasha*, its hero being ‘an ordinary fellow’ and its theme—an attack on the Russian romantics and their absurd ideas of love. The second story, too, had a ‘literary’ subject for its theme—the dethroning of the Byronic type made popular by Pechorin, the chief character in Lermontov’s *A Hero of Our Time*. Nothing in either of them is characteristic of Turgenev. ‘Oh, the literature that smells of literature!’ he was to exclaim scornfully many years later, writing to Annenkov about this type of story. The fact that he wrote *Khor and Kalinych*, though he did not at first realise its importance as a work of art and a revolutionary document, shows that his artistic instinct was stronger than his critical sense.

The two years he spent in Russia after his short trip to France and his departure abroad for a stay of over three years, were mainly remarkable for the literary friendships he had made. Dostoevsky, Goncharov, Nekrasov, Herzen, Grigorovich and Polonsky—those were the people with whom he was to be closely associated in literature as well as in private life. With the first three he was to be involved in the most bitter quarrels of his life; Herzen was to exercise the strongest political influence on him, an influence that was also

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

to end in a bitter quarrel; Grigorovich and the poet Polonsky were to become the living links between him and Chekhov. Dostoevsky, the greatest and the most absurd among these men, was three years younger than Turgenev. He had just finished his first novel, *Poor Folk*, and Belinsky's praises had gone to his head. To begin with, his relations with Turgenev seem to have been extremely friendly. 'The other day', Dostoevsky wrote to his brother on 16 November 1845, 'the poet Turgenev returned to Russia [Turgenev had actually returned months before] and at once became attached to me with such a friendship that Belinsky explained it by saying that Turgenev had fallen in love with me. But, my dear brother, what an excellent fellow he is! I, too, have almost fallen in love with him. A poet, a man of talent, an aristocrat, a handsome fellow, rich, intelligent, educated, twenty-five years old—I don't know if there is anything nature has denied him! Finally, an infinitely upright character, trained in a good school, a wonderful fellow! Read his story in *Home Annals*—*Andrey Kolosov*—it is his, though he never thought of showing off [Turgenev published his story under the initials T.L.—Turgenev-Lutovinov].' Dostoevsky had just written a short novel for a humorous publication Nekrasov was planning at the time (it has not been preserved) and was tremendously excited about it. 'This evening', he wrote to his brother in the same letter, 'my new novel was read at Turgenev's to our entire circle, that is, to at least twenty people, and created a sensation.' He ends his letter with this characteristic post-script: 'The Minnas, Claras, Mariannas, etc., have grown prettier than ever, but they are confoundedly expensive. The other day Belinsky and Turgenev hauled me over the coals properly for my disorderly life. These fellows simply don't know how to show their affection for me, they are all in love with me. My debts', he concludes characteristically, 'are as bad as ever.' Here are a few more typical extracts from Dostoevsky's letters to his brother: 'Half of Petersburg is talking of *Poor Folk*. Everywhere I meet with incredible respect. Everyone looks on me as a miracle. I can't open my mouth but it is repeated everywhere that Dostoevsky said this or that Dostoevsky did that. . . . Can you imagine it? Even Belinsky is convinced that I have left Gogol far behind. . . . My fame has reached its zenith. . . . I have plunged into high society and

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

I hope to tell you of my adventures personally in three months' time. . . .'

Alas, in three months' time his fame had dissolved into thin air, and as for his adventures in high society, he had only one, and it was such a disastrous flop that it moved Turgenev and Nekrasov to write their famous skit on Dostoevsky as 'The Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance'. Panayev writes in his memoirs: 'We trumpeted his [Dostoevsky's] name all over the town, in the public squares and in the fashionable drawing-rooms. A young society girl, the daughter of a great nobleman, expressed the wish to see him and we presented our idol to her. The girl was about to open her pretty mouth to pay him an exquisite compliment, when he suddenly turned pale and began to sway. We carried him to a back room and sprinkled his face with eau-de-cologne. He recovered consciousness, but refused to enter the drawing-room again.'

Turgenev's skit describes Dostoevsky as 'blossoming on the nose of literature like a ripe pimple' and refers to him as having 'dipped his snub nose before a Russian beauty' and 'nearly perished in the prime of life'. It also includes a most uncomplimentary reference to his most recent story, *The Double*, and to the anecdote current among his friends that he had demanded that Nekrasov should publish *Poor Folk* in his *Petersburg Symposium* with a special border on each page (a story Dostoevsky thought it necessary to deny before his death).

It is perhaps not surprising that Dostoevsky (who, as he wrote to his brother, was himself fully conscious that his greatest vice was self-conceit and vanity) should soon have become the butt of Turgenev's mordant wit. In Mrs. Panayev's drawing room (Dostoevsky had lost his heart to this famous Petersburg beauty) Turgenev would purposely draw Dostoevsky into an argument and, Mrs. Panayev writes, 'drive him to desperation'. One evening Turgenev began to describe a meeting with a man who imagined himself to be a genius and so cleverly took off Dostoevsky himself that the latter turned white as a sheet and rushed out without waiting for the end of the story. It must have been particularly galling to a man of his morbid vanity to hear himself ridiculed in the presence of a woman he admired. That, at any rate, seems to have been the end of his association with Belinsky's friends, and there can be no doubt

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

that he never forgave Turgenev for amusing himself at his expense. It was indeed unfortunate that the two should have met at that period of Turgenev's life when his sense of frustration with his literary efforts, and his unhappy love for Pauline Viardot, had magnified one of the least admirable traits of his character, a trait of which he only rid himself as he matured into manhood.

7

The year 1847 was remarkable for the publication of three novels—Dostoevsky's *Poor Folk*, Goncharov's *An Ordinary Story*, and Grigorovich's sentimental tale of country life—*Anton the Poor Wretch*—which at once brought fame to their authors. Grigorovich was the least talented of the three. Turgenev never really respected him. Goncharov, a civil servant employed at the Ministry of Finance, was a much more formidable writer, and it seems that Turgenev was at first as excited about him as he had been about Dostoevsky. He tried to become more intimate with him, but he soon discovered (as he told his friends) that Goncharov was 'a bureaucrat at heart', that his mental outlook was limited, that he was not interested in social questions and that he was even afraid to discuss them. Goncharov, too, became the butt of Turgenev's epigrams, but at the time he did not consider Turgenev a dangerous literary rival and put up good-naturedly with his gibes. The position was to change radically when Turgenev became the foremost writer of his day.

In 1846 Panayev and Nekrasov bought the moribund *Contemporary Review* from Professor Pletnyov (the publication of new reviews was forbidden in Russia). 'I must tell you', Turgenev wrote to Pauline Viardot on 20 November 1846, 'that we have succeeded in founding our own journal which will appear in the new year and which is coming out under very favourable auspices. I shall be taking part in it only as a contributor.' In the same letter Turgenev speaks of 'being very busy at the moment' and of seeing 'practically no-one. My health is good,' he goes on. 'My eyes have not grown worse, which is a blessing in itself. I have three very nice small rooms where I live alone with my books, which I have finally succeeded in collecting from the four quarters of the globe—my hopes

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

and my memories. I should very much like to have had with me the excellent horse which I used to ride in the country, but life is so expensive in Petersburg. It is an English mare, a light bay, of an admirable appearance, sweetness, strength and spirit. I have also had the good fortune to acquire an excellent hunting dog, or rather a bitch. Her name is Pif (a funny name for a bitch, isn't it?). My mare, on the other hand, has been christened Queen Victoria by an old English-woman who lives with my mother. I have another dog, a water dog, a monster of ugliness, a good-for-nothing hound, who is very attached to me, however. He answers to the name of Paradise Lost.'

He was waiting impatiently for the arrival of Pauline Viardot, who was to appear at the Italian opera in Petersburg for the third time. 'Au revoir, one beautiful day,' he concludes his letter. 'Ah, I can well believe that the day will be beautiful.'

In her letter to Turgenev Pauline Viardot seems to have discussed the operas in which she was going to appear at the Berlin Opera House, and in his reply Turgenev congratulated her on her success in *Norma* and advised her to read Goethe's play before singing in *Iphigénie* before a German audience. 'Goethe's tragedy,' he wrote, 'is certainly grand and beautiful, of an antique simplicity, chastity and calm, perhaps too much calm, especially for you who, thank Heaven, have come from the South. However, as there is already a great deal of calm in your character,' he added maliciously, 'this part ought, I think, to suit you down to the ground, particularly as you have to make no effort to raise yourself to everything that is noble, majestic and true in Goethe's character—all this comes naturally to you.'

The remarkable thing about this letter is that Turgenev appears as quite a different person in it. There is no trace of his epigrammatic moods, no vestige of his bitter sarcasm, no attempt at showing off. His description of himself as a recluse may not have been quite true but it was all part of that strange fascination which Pauline Viardot cast over him, a fascination that made him see himself in quite a different light. It was a discipline—often a very harsh one—in character training that deepened his perceptions and taught him the value of artistic detachment and the secret of transmuting experience into art.

'He was an artist and psychologist in relation to himself, too,'

'A Poet, A Man of Talent, An Aristocrat'

Annenkov summed up this gradual change in Turgenev's character. 'The double analysis—aesthetic and moral—to which he began to subject himself early in life wrought a radical change in the whole of his moral outlook, putting an end to the vain pursuit of affected feelings and artificial excitements which he had formerly found so necessary for his ephemeral triumphs.'



*employé important ou industriel important -
absence d'invention, et d'originalité - mais auto-
rité, honnêteté, lucidité, décision - Est très propre,
gracieusement poli - Tenue bourgeoise, parole
haute et dure d'elle même - On le craint dans la
famille, car on ne sait pas mentir - Est
d'une taille moyenne, marche avec aplomb et
tient le bon tabac et le linge fin. A de
magnifiques foulards dans lesquels il se moule
avec grand bruit.*

The Business Executive

[Important employee or important industrialist—lacking in invention and originality—but possessing authority, integrity, clarity, resoluteness. Well groomed and gravely courteous. Bourgeois appearance. Speaks in a loud and self-confident voice. Though his family is afraid of him, he is by no means ill-natured. Of medium height, walks with great self-assurance and smells of good tobacco and fine linen. Is the possessor of magnificent silk handkerchiefs into which he blows with a loud noise.]

PART FOUR

Courtavenel—
'The Cradle of my Fame'

2

Turgenev left Russia with the Viardots at the beginning of February 1847. There were other reasons, besides Pauline Viardot, which made him wish to leave Russia. His relations with his mother were becoming increasingly strained. Varvara Petrovna had made a point of going to hear Pauline Viardot during her Moscow season. 'I must say,' was her verdict, 'the damned gipsy woman sings well.' But seeing 'the damned gipsy woman' merely made her more determined than ever to force her son to give her up. Her hysterical letters, in which she accused him of callousness and laziness, became more and more menacing. There was, however, another even more powerful reason for his wishing to go abroad. 'The environment to which I belonged,' he writes in the introduction to his reminiscences, 'or rather the serf-owning section of it, if one may put it like that, had nothing about it to keep me in Russia. On the contrary, almost everything I saw aroused in me a feeling of embarrassment, indignation and disgust. . . . I hated the very air I breathed, I could not live side by side with what I abominated; I daresay I did not possess sufficient strength of character for that. I had to put a certain distance between myself and my enemy so as to be able to attack it more effectively. In my eyes this enemy had a clearly defined form and bore a familiar name: serfdom. In this name was concentrated everything I had made up my mind to fight—everything I swore never to become reconciled to. That was my Hannibal's oath; and I was not the only one to take it at the time. I went to Western Europe so as to be able to carry it out.' If he had remained in Russia, Turgenev asserted, he would never have written

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

The Diary of a Sportsman. In this he almost echoed the claim made by Gogol that he would never have written *Dead Souls* if he had not left Russia. But Turgenev's hatred of oppression was much deeper than Gogol's. 'Oh Lord', he makes a character in one of his last stories exclaim, 'there is injustice, oppression and wickedness everywhere. . . . I don't want to live in Russia!' And shortly before he left Russia in 1847, he wrote a poem in blank verse extolling Filippo Strozzi's fight against the tyranny of the Medicis, Strozzi who—

*Dearly loved his country, loved freedom,
And, true to Zeno's rigorous wisdom,
Feared not death, nor madly in life
Rejoiced, but dishonour could not bear,
And in slavery could not, nay, would not live.*

After describing Strozzi's appeal to Charles V to remove Alexander Medici, a vain appeal, since 'all emperors are in league with each other', his unsuccessful attempt to liberate his country, and his final imprisonment and torture, Turgenev concludes his poem with the bitter lines—

*Blessed are they on whom fate benignly smiles,
Blessed are they who are happy, strong and unjust.*

The censorship refused to allow the publication of the poem in the *Contemporary Review*, and it was published only after Turgenev's death.

Still another reason for Turgenev's decision to go abroad at that particular time was that he had undertaken to look after Belinsky, whose health had deteriorated so greatly that his friends advised him to try the waters of the Silesian spa of Salzbrunn which were supposed to cure consumption. Before he left for Germany, Turgenev had stood godfather to Belinsky's son who died a few months later, and written two more stories of his *Diary of a Sportsman*—*Pyotr Petrovich Karatayev* and *Yermolay and the Miller's Wife*. Belinsky thought that *Khor and Kalinych*, in particular, showed promise of his becoming 'a remarkable writer—in future', adding, with a discernment that did credit to his critical genius, that in his opinion Turgenev's vocation was 'to observe the actual occurrences of life and communicate them by letting them filter through his imagination without, however, relying too much on it'.

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

Belinsky's journey abroad was made possible by the generous response of his friends to an appeal for funds made by Botkin. Annenkov, who was in Paris at the time, not only contributed 400 francs, but also promised to join Belinsky and Turgenev in Salzbrenn. Belinsky arrived in Berlin on 22 May (Turgenev mistakenly states in his reminiscences that he had gone to Stettin to meet Belinsky: he had intended to go, but was kept too busy running errands for Pauline Viardot). In Berlin Turgenev made the acquaintance of Clara Schumann, Dr. Hermann Mueller-Struebing, a German democrat who was to become an Oxford professor, and Ludwig Pietsch, who left the following description of him: 'I was just leaving the reading room of the Berlin public library when I saw the tall, broad-shouldered figure of a man of about twenty-seven or twenty-eight, wearing an enormous fur coat, coming up the stairs. His head was particularly striking: it was a head such as I had never seen before and was never likely to forget. His face was unmistakably Russian. It had prominent cheek-bones and was dominated by a nobly-fashioned high forehead and a powerful nose. His head was covered with thick and rather long brown hair, parted on the right side. Thick, almost black eyebrows over-shadowed his greenish brown eyes, curiously melancholy and soft and set wide apart. A short brown moustache covered his slightly pouting upper lip. His cheeks and finely chiselled chin were clean shaven. Turgenev,' Pietsch concludes, 'spoke German fluently, though with a slight accent.'

From Berlin Turgenev and Belinsky travelled to Dresden. Turgenev was drawn irresistibly in the wake of Pauline Viardot, who was singing at the Dresden opera, though the reason he gave Mrs. Belinsky for dragging her husband there was that it was too early for them to go to Silesia. He arranged a meeting between Belinsky and Pauline Viardot at the Dresden gallery. Belinsky, wearing a long, shabby frock-coat and a cap with a straight peak, and leaning heavily on a thick stick, felt greatly embarrassed in the presence of the fashionably dressed prima donna. When she asked him in French how he was, he did not know what she was saying. She repeated her question and still he did not understand. Then she began talking to him in broken Russian, laughing uproariously all the time at the way she mispronounced the words. She liked to show

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

her dazzling white teeth ('Laugh, laugh uproariously,' Turgenev wrote to her later in the year, 'to show all your teeth'), but her laughter embarrassed Belinsky more than ever. He began replying to her 'in the vilest French, used only by horses', as he expressed it, and was completely put out of countenance.

In June they arrived in Salzbrunn, where they took rooms on the ground floor of a two-storied wooden house in the main street of the little town. Annenkov joined them there a short time after, taking a room on the first floor. Belinsky got up very early in the morning and went to take the waters. On his return, he would walk upstairs to Annenkov's room and wake him with the words, 'Wake up, sybarite!' During the day he engaged in long arguments with Turgenev, which invariably began with the phrase: 'Take care, boy, I'll put you in a corner!' The 'boy', however, was not at all put out by his 'father and commander', as he affectionately called Belinsky, and very often spoke his mind plainly about what he considered to be Belinsky's utter ignorance of life and his inability to cope with practical affairs. 'However animated our talks were', Annenkov writes, 'they could not possibly fill the whole of a summer's day in a small town which lacked all intellectual amusements. In vain did we exchange reminiscences during our morning coffee, which we tried to prolong as much as possible, sitting under the awning of a shed in our little courtyard; in vain did we exchange humorous stories or discuss the latest articles and books we had read, while dining in some restaurant—there was still a great deal of time left on our hands. Besides, we had to be very careful that the stories we told were not very funny, for Belinsky was quick to enjoy a joke and his laughter usually ended in a paroxysm of coughing; nor was it advisable to discuss any controversial subjects, for such a discussion immediately brought a flush to Belinsky's cheeks and was followed by physical prostration.'

Turgenev had been acting as Belinsky's nurse for two months and he was beginning to feel the need for a change. At first he tried to stick it by sitting down to work. He wrote *The Bailiff*, one of the most challenging stories in his *Diary of a Sportsman*. Belinsky, too, was not idle. It was at Salzbrunn that he wrote his famous open letter to Gogol, attacking the great Russian writer's reactionary views on his *Selected Passages from Correspondence with my Friends*.

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

The possession of Belinsky's letter to Gogol was to become a criminal offence in Russia and it was largely responsible for Dostoevsky's arrest and imprisonment in Siberia. It was only published in Russia in 1905, though it first appeared in print in 1855 in the Russian periodical *Polar Star* published by Herzen in London.

By the middle of July Turgenev felt that he could no longer bear to remain in Salzbrunn, and when he received a letter from Pauline Viardot with the news that she was going to England for a concert, he made up his mind to leave at once. He told Belinsky and Annenkov that he was going to Berlin to take leave of some friends and that he would be back in a few days. He may have intended to return, for he left most of his things behind, but in Berlin he changed his mind and accompanied Pauline Viardot to London.

Nothing is known about Turgenev's first visit to London. He spent only one week in England and was back with Pauline in Courtavenel by the end of July. Occasionally he would go up to Paris for a few days to see Belinsky, who had entered a private nursing home there. 'Belinsky', Turgenev writes in his reminiscences, 'was terribly bored in Paris. I remember taking him for the first time to the Place de la Concorde. He asked me at once, "It's the most beautiful square in the world, isn't it?" And when I agreed, he cried, "Very well, that's all I wanted to know," and began talking about Gogol. I told him that during the revolution the guillotine had stood on that very square and that Louis XVI had been beheaded there. He looked round, said, "Ah!" and recalled the scene of Ostap's execution in *Taras Bulba*.'

Turgenev did not see Belinsky off when he left for Russia in September. Instead he wrote him a letter in which he expressed the hope of seeing him in Petersburg early in the new year, which seems to show that he had made little progress in his relations with Pauline Viardot at the time. 'During all these months', he wrote to Belinsky, 'I have not done anything of importance; I did, however, write two more sketches (for *The Diary of a Sportsman*). The old ones (*The Bailiff* and *The Office*) I have copied out and sent off to Nekrasov. . . . (I can't say anything definite about myself,' he concluded. 'What will be, will be—the great saying of fatalists and brainless chaps like me.')

He left Courtavenel in October and settled in Paris for the next

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

nine months, except for a short trip to Belgium at the time of the February revolution. In the autumn and winter of 1847 and 1848 Pauline Viardot was touring Germany, and Turgenev's long letters to her provide a circumstantial account not only of the way he was spending his time in Paris, but also of his thoughts and writings at what turned out to be one of the most prolific periods of his life.

What exactly were his relations to Pauline Viardot? And what was the nature of the hold she had over him? A curious story he wrote in the late summer of 1847 seems to provide an answer to these questions. In this story—*Petushkov*—a poor army lieutenant falls in love with a young girl, the niece of a widow who owns a bakery in a small provincial town in Russia. He soon discovers that she is a common slut, but to his horror he finds that that makes no difference to his feelings. 'Love', Turgenev comments, 'is an accidental thing, it exists in itself, like art, and, like nature, it needs no justification.' Petushkov realises very well his humiliating position, but he cannot do anything about it. The girl's indifference merely increases his dependence on her. 'What did I find in her?' he muses, as he lies idly on the sofa. 'There is nothing extraordinary about her.' And yet he goes back to her and implores her to let him visit her again. 'I'll be as meek as a lamb,' he tells her. 'You can go to anyone you like, and I shan't say a cross word to you. . . .' Ten years pass. The widow has died, the young girl has married, but Petushkov—thin, red-nosed, wearing an old green coat with a greasy collar—still lives in a little room at the bakery.

So that was the position—a slut and a man who knows all about her and yet has not the strength to leave her. And this is not all: when one compares the end of the story and the last ten years of Turgenev's life when he, too, occupied a few rooms in Pauline Viardot's house in Paris, his analysis of his attachment to Pauline Viardot becomes frightening in its ruthless logic. To be sure, in *Petushkov* Turgenev has shorn his feelings for Pauline Viardot of all their artistic and intellectual glamour and reduced them to their rock-bottom essentials. It would be absurd to look for any similarities between the hero and heroine of *Petushkov* and a young writer of genius and one of the greatest operatic singers of her time, but their inner substance, the human element in them, was the same and their future, too, was to be the same. Like Petushkov, Tur-

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

genev was fated—to use a phrase that occurs in *On the Eve* and in many of his letters—'to cling precariously to the edge of a stranger's nest.' *Petushkov* is the first example of what Turgenev was to call 'an author's delight in self-castigation'. It is self-castigation with a vengeance.

2

After Turgenev's death Pauline Viardot (she herself died in 1910, surviving him by twenty-seven years) used to say that the Russians did not know how much they owed to her in making Turgenev stick to his writing. She had in mind those early days in Paris and at Courtavenel when Turgenev was unknown and poor (Varvara Petrovna soon stopped his allowance altogether) and when she seems to have insisted that he should carry on with the writing of his stories and plays. In his letters to her at the end of 1847 Turgenev again and again assured her that he was working hard. 'I have just sent off a huge parcel to our review,' he wrote to her on October 19. 'That is how I am keeping my promise to you. . . . All the morning', he wrote to her a fortnight later, 'I have been working; at two o'clock I go to see your mother (where he read Pauline Viardot's letters—'always twice over in a loud voice'). Then I read the papers, take a walk (usually in the Tuileries Gardens where he liked to watch the children play and talk to them), and after dinner I go to a theatre or go back to your mother's; in the evening I go to see my friends, mostly Annenkov, who is a nice fellow—his mind is as sharp as his body is fat; and then I go to bed, and that's all.'

He was reading a great deal, too. He found Diderot's paradoxes just good enough to amuse oneself with, to refute and to forget. 'Most decidedly', he wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'the brilliance and the artifice of his paradoxes will never stand up to the light of the sun's truth. And yet what can be simpler and more ordinary than the sun? By Jove, long live the sun! Long live everything that is good for the whole world!' Daumer's *The Mysteries of Christianity* he thought for the most part utterly absurd, but it made him reflect on the 'melancholy and anti-human' side of a religion that should have been full of love and mercy. 'You can't imagine', he

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

declared in the same letter, 'the terrible effect produced on me by all those stories of the martyrs, all those flagellations, processions, adorations of relics, auto-da-fés, all that ferocious contempt of life, that horror of women, all those wounds and all that blood! All this is so painful that I would rather not talk to you about it.' Guzkow's play *Uriel Acosta*, which Pauline Viardot had been reading at the time, he condemned as stuffed full of theatrical effects, for, he asked, could anything be more disgusting than crudeness, even if it was not *naïve*? 'The shadow of Shakespeare', he wrote, 'hangs heavy on all playwrights; they can never rid themselves of their bad habit of borrowing; the poor devils have read too much and lived too little. . . . In our own time,' he went on, 'there is nothing worth reading. Gluck once said about an opera that it stank of music—*puzza musica*. The same can be said of all our contemporary literary works which *stink* of literature, of craftsmanship and conventionality. To find a spring that is still pure and undefiled, we must go back a long, long way. The literary itch, the prattle of egoism which studies and admires itself—that is the disease of our time. We are like dogs who return to their vomit. . . . There is today neither God nor Devil, but the coming of Man is still far off.' He thanked God for Michelet, whose second volume of the French Revolution had just been published. 'Michelet', he wrote, 'is a man of the people who speaks to the people, a man of great intellect and noble heart.'

His frequent visits to the theatre and his own attempts at play-writing (he had just finished his first one-act comedy, *The Weakest Link*) made him draw an unflattering comparison between French plays and the classical drama of Greece, England and Spain. In December he went to see a revue—*Le Banc d'Huîtres* (The Bench of Dunces)—at the Palais Royal. 'It was very jolly and I laughed a lot,' he wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'but, dear me, how anaemic, feeble and pitiful the whole thing is compared with what—I do not say Aristophanes, but anyone belonging to his school, could have made of it! Oh, what wouldn't I give to see a fantastic, extravagant, ironic and moving comedy, pitiless to everything that is weak and rotten in society and even in man himself, that makes man laugh at his own poverty, that sings the praises of folly in order to hold it up to scorn and throw it back in our teeth. What wouldn't one give

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

for such a play! But no, we seem to have been delivered for ever into the hands of Scribe!

His Spanish had by then sufficiently advanced not only to enable him to read Pauline Viardot's letters to her mother, but also to make a thorough study of Calderon, 'the greatest Catholic playwright,' he wrote, 'as Shakespeare was the most humanistic and the most anti-christian dramatist.' In his letters he mentions three of Calderon's plays: *Devocion de la Cruz*, *La Vida es Sueño*, and *El Magico Prodigioso*. The first play, he wrote, expressed 'unshaken and triumphant faith, without a shadow of doubt or reflection. It crushes you by its grandeur and power in spite of everything that is repellent and cruel in that doctrine. This abasement of everything that stands for human dignity before God's will . . . is merely another triumph of human reason; for a human being who proclaims with such audacity his own worthlessness proclaims himself by that very fact to be the equal of that fantastic Divinity whose plaything he considers himself to be. And that Divinity, too, is the work of his hands. For my part,' Turgenev went on, 'I prefer Prometheus, I prefer Satan, the prototype of revolt and individuality. Atom though I am, I am my own master, I want truth and not salvation, and I expect to get it from my reason and not from grace.'

Still, Calderon, he could not help thinking, was quite an extraordinary genius, a genius who above all was vigorous. 'As for ourselves,' he declared, 'the feeble descendants of mighty ancestors, the best we can do is to be graceful in our feebleness. I am thinking', he added, 'of Musset's *Caprice*, which continues to create a sensation here.'

Calderon's second play—*Life is a Dream*—he thought 'the most majestic dramatic conception' he had ever seen or read. 'It is permeated by a savage energy,' he wrote, 'a sombre and profound contempt of life; an astonishing boldness of thought side by side with the most inflexible Catholic fanaticism. Its protagonist Sigismond', he went on, 'is the Spanish Hamlet with all the difference that exists between the North and the South. Hamlet is more meditative, more subtle, more of a philosopher; Sigismond's character is simple, bare and penetrating like a rapier; the first does not act because of his irresolution, his doubts and his reflections; the

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

second acts because his Southern blood forces him to act, but even while he acts he knows very well that life is nothing but a dream.'

Reading Calderon's plays Turgenev felt that they had grown naturally in a mighty and fruitful soil: their taste and their aroma were simple; one did not feel the presence of 'a literary gravy' in them. 'Drama in Spain', he wrote, 'was the last and the best expression of a naïve Catholicism and a society created in its image, whereas in the critical and transition period we are going through now all artistic and literary works represent—at most— personal opinions and individual feelings, vague and contradictory reflections, the eclecticism of their authors; life has crumbled into bits and pieces; there is no longer a general great movement, except perhaps industry which, if one considers it from the point of view of the progressive submission of the elements of nature to man's genius, will perhaps become the liberator and the regenerator of humanity. Therefore,' Turgenev concluded, 'the greatest poets of our time are, in my opinion, the Americans who are about to cut through the Panama isthmus and are discussing the question of laying a telegraph cable across the ocean. And once the social revolution is an accomplished fact—long live the new literature!'

But new or old—and one must remember that when he wrote this the great efflorescence of the Russian creative genius in the nineteenth century, in which he was to play such a prominent part, was still largely to come—what was the secret of great art?

Turgenev's answer was unhesitating and, indeed, characteristic of his own art: a true equilibrium between heart and mind. It was Mendelssohn's death on 4 November 1847, that made him think of this question and he came to the conclusion that in a great artist 'talent and instinct' or 'the head and the heart' must be equal partners. In Mendelssohn, he thought, the head predominated and that was why he could respect but not love him. As for 'the true and only beauty of art', it arose, he thought, from the calm emanating from a strong conviction or a profound feeling, the calm which, as it were, enveloped on all sides the most desperate outbursts of passion and imparted a purity of lines to them. A great artist, too, must be comprehensible to everybody and, at the same time, have many things reserved for the elect.

He criticised George Sand for using too many country dialect

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

words in her last novel *François le Champi* on the ground that art was not 'a daguerreotype' and that it was only an artist '*un peu blasé*' who could allow himself such 'caprices'. What he admired in George Sand, not surprisingly perhaps in a great painter in words like himself, was her ability to convey the most subtle and fugitive impressions in a firm, clear and comprehensible manner, her ability to *paint* everything, even the faintest sounds and smells of the countryside. Her description of an autumn day brought back to his mind a country walk he had taken with Pauline Viardot. 'I can see again', he wrote to her on 17 January 1848, 'the golden foliage against a light blue sky, the red hips of the wild roses in the hedges, the flock of sheep, the shepherd with his dogs, and—lots of other things.'

3

In the winter of 1847 Turgenev lived in a small room near the Palais Royal and he often went to the Café de la Rotonde for his morning cup of coffee. It was there that at the beginning of February 1848, he met the mysterious 'man in grey spectacles' who foretold the proclamation and the fall of the Second Republic. He described this meeting in an article he wrote for *La Nouvelle Revue* in August 1879. 'This sketch', he declared in a note, 'has one great fault: it contains predictions which all came true. It is a fault, however, that I cannot make good. Indeed, I maintain that the man I am talking about did actually exist and did tell me all the things in my sketch.' It is doubtful, however, whether after more than thirty years Turgenev would have been able to remember the exact words the shabbily dressed 'man in grey spectacles' had told him. Indeed, there is a reference to Herzen in his article which could not possibly be true. Herzen arrived in Paris two months after the February revolution and yet Turgenev claims that he had accused 'the man in grey spectacles' of being a spy several weeks before the revolution. The passage of years has cast a romantic veil over the events described by Turgenev, and the supernatural element in the sketch is most certainly an accretion of his old age.

Turgenev was not in Paris at the outbreak of the revolution. 'A short time before 24 February,' he writes, 'I had gone to Belgium,

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

and the news of the revolution in France reached me in Brussels [where presumably Pauline Viardot was singing at the time]. I remember that no one received any letters or papers that day. Crowds gathered in the streets and squares; everyone looked anxious and subdued in expectation of news from France. On 26 February at six o'clock in the morning, I was lying in bed in my hotel room, when suddenly the door was flung open and someone shouted in a loud voice: "France has become a republic!" Unable to believe my ears, I jumped out of bed and rushed out of the room. One of the hotel waiters was running along the corridor flinging open the doors to the right and left, and bawling out his astonishing news. Half an hour later I was already dressed and packed, and on the same day was travelling by train to Paris.'

He and his 'companions' (no doubt, Pauline and her husband Louis Viardot) arrived in Paris after an adventurous journey, during which their train was involved in a railway accident. The streets of Paris were full of armed workmen pulling down the barricades; everywhere the tricolour cockades of the republic were to be seen. Turgenev spent his first day in the second French republic in 'a kind of a daze'. His excitement is understandable since he was in full sympathy with the revolution. But while deeply interested in the historic events which were shaking the whole of Europe to its foundations, Turgenev took no part in them. Bakunin, who appeared in Paris immediately after the revolution, threw himself heart and soul into the movement for the destruction of the Austrian and Russian empires and the formation of a Pan-Slav federation of states. Georg Herwegh, the German revolutionary poet who was a close friend of Bakunin, Herzen and Turgenev, embarked on 23 April on his ill-starred campaign against the Duke of Baden-Baden, as a preliminary step towards the proclamation of a German republic. His little army of German refugee workers was defeated by the Duke's army and he himself had to flee ignominiously from the battlefield. 'The expedition of my poor friend Herwegh', Turgenev wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'was a complete fiasco; the poor devils of German workmen were massacred, his second in command was shot dead, and Herwegh himself, I understand, has returned to Strasbourg with his wife. If he arrives here, I shall advise him to re-read *King Lear*, especially the scene on the heath between the King,

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

Edgar and the Fool. Poor devil! He should either not have started the affair or have got himself killed like the other one.'

It was, of course, easy for Turgenev to counsel his friends what to do: he himself carried on as usual. He went to the Salon Exhibition and, to his disgust, found only one picture there that interested him: Delacroix's little sketch of a lion devouring a sheep in a forest. He went to see the hundred sketches submitted by French sculptors for a statue of the Republic and was even more disgusted: the whole thing, he wrote to Pauline Viardot, was an unimaginable abomination. Finally, he went to the ballet *Les Cinq Sens* and found it incredibly absurd. Like Chekhov after him, he was no balletomane: 'Legs, legs, legs—it's monotonous!' he declared.

The spring of 1848 was cold and dismal. 'So far,' he wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'we have had only *a genuine English sun, warranted to produce a gentle and comfortable heat*' (the italicised words are written in English). Still, when he opened a window and caught a breath of the spring air he could not help wishing to be happy. But happiness could mean only one thing to him then, as Pauline Viardot knew very well, and it was as far off as ever. It was in his letter to Pauline Viardot of 30 April that the note of deep pessimism which seems to have been closely connected with his unhappy love affair and which, as the years passed, took more and more possession of him, was sounded for the first time. 'Life,' he wrote, 'this tiny spark glowing in the dark and mute ocean of Eternity, this one moment that belongs to us, etc. etc. . . . I'm afraid this is a platitude, and yet it is true.' He read Pascal's *Les Provinciales* and found it full of good sense, eloquence and comic spirit, but the book as a whole struck him as the work of 'a Catholic slave'. As for de Maistre's *Voyage autour de ma chambre*, he thought it but a feeble imitation of Laurence Sterne. 'The imitators of Sterne', he wrote, 'always strike me as horrible—egoists full of sensibility who mollycoddle themselves, are lost in self-admiration and self-flattery, and at the same time assume an air of simplicity and good nature.'

The coming of warmer weather drove him into the country. 'I spent over four hours in the woods today,' he wrote to Pauline Viardot on 1 May, 'sad, deeply moved, attentive, absorbing and absorbed. The impression produced by nature on a man who is

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

alone with her is very strange. There is in it a sediment of *fresh* bitterness, the sort of thing you find in all the smells of the countryside, and a little *serene* melancholy, as in the songs of birds. You understand, of course, what I want to say, for you understand me better than I understand myself. I cannot see a branch covered with young green leaves, and set off against the sky, without emotion. Why? Yes, why? Is it because of the contrast between this small, living branch, which I can break and which must die, but which is brought to life and colour by the generous sap, and this eternal and empty immensity, this sky which is so blue and so radiant only because of the earth? (For outside our atmosphere the cold reaches 70° and there is very little *light* there. The light increases a hundredfold when it comes into contact with the earth.) Oh, I cannot bear the sky—but life, reality, its caprices, its hazards, its habits, its fugitive beauty—I adore all this. I am chained to the soil. I'd rather gaze at the rapid movements of the wet foot of a duck, scratching itself behind the head on the bank of a lake, or at the big sparkling drops of water falling from the muzzle of a cow, standing motionless up to her knees in a pond where she had gone to drink—than at all that the cherubim (those "illustrious faces") can perceive in the skies.'

But it was not only the sky that he could not bear. As a child a fight between a grass snake and a toad in the park at Spasskoye made him doubt for the first time the goodness of Providence; as a man of thirty 'the brutal indifference of nature' struck a chill into his heart. 'We alone', he wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'possess a soul, and perhaps a few more creatures besides us. But it is a feeble light which the night always strives to swallow up. That, however, does not prevent nature from being ravishingly beautiful, and the nightingale can give us moments of indescribable rapture while some unhappy half-crushed insect is dying in agony in its crop—how sad it all is!'

This melancholy mood of his sometimes drove him to all sorts of absurd and weird actions. 'From time to time', he explained to Pauline Viardot, 'I find it necessary to indulge in all sorts of mad pranks; without that safety-valve I run the danger of going mad in good earnest.' He used to visit the Tuchkovs, a Russian family which had arrived from Italy and to which Annenkov had intro-

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

duced him, and spend a great deal of time with their pretty young daughter. He read poetry to her (all his life he like reading poetry to pretty young girls) and presented her with a bottle of his favourite gardenia scent. But occasionally he would behave very strangely indeed. He would, for instance, ask permission to climb on the window-sill and crow like a cock. When he visited the Herzens, he would borrow Mrs. Herzen's cloak, drape himself in it 'very strangely', and start acting a madman. Or he would ruffle up his hair, let it fall over half his face and, his eyes blazing, act a man 'in a frenzy of anger'. 'We thought', Natalie Herzen declared, 'that it would be very funny, but somehow it made us feel depressed.' At home he would act no less queerly. He would sit for hours staring blankly at the curtains, then he would get up suddenly, tear down a curtain, make a huge dunce's cap out of it, put it on his head and stand a long time like that in a corner with his face to the wall. 'My fit of depression', he told his friends, 'would gradually pass, my peace of mind would return and I would feel cheerful again.'

4

The political events in Paris in the spring and early summer of 1848 provided Turgenev with plenty of excitement to dispel the darkest depression. On 15 May 1848, a mass demonstration in favour of the independence of Poland assumed an anti-government character. The workers attempted to storm the National Assembly and the crowds were later dispersed by troops. Turgenev spent the whole day watching the first clash between the supporters of Louis Napoleon and the republicans. He left a detailed description of it in a letter to Pauline Viardot. What struck him particularly was the way the vendors of chocolate and cigars kept moving in and out of the crowds. 'Greedy, contented and indifferent,' he wrote, 'they looked like fishermen hauling in a net full of fish.' What surprised him even more was the impossibility of finding out what the people in the streets really thought at a moment like that. They looked to him as if they were waiting for a thunderstorm to pass. He kept questioning the workmen in the crowd, but they were just waiting—waiting. What was history, he wondered: providence, chance, irony or just a fatality?

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

But a few weeks later this question was answered in no uncertain manner. Turgenev had just moved to a new room in a four-storied house at the corner of the rue de la Paix and the boulevard des Italiens. His funds were low and his room was on the fourth floor (he would move to a room on the lower floors whenever he could afford it). On Friday morning of 23 June his laundry woman brought him his washing. '*Ça a commencé,*' she said, explaining that a huge barricade had been erected at the end of the boulevard near the Porte St. Denis. Turgenev at once went to have a look at it. At first he did not notice anything out of the ordinary. There were the usual crowds in front of the shops and the cafés; carriages and omnibuses rattled through the streets. The faces of the people looked a little more excited, though, and they talked more loudly and, strange to say, looked more cheerful. But the farther he walked, the more deserted did the boulevard become; there were fewer carriages, no omnibuses, and the shops and cafés were being hastily closed. But all the windows were wide open, and lots of people, mostly women and children with their maids and nurses, thronged in the doorways, talking, laughing, shouting across the street to their friends, and waving their arms about. Gaily coloured ribbons, shawls and caps, white, pink and blue skirts flickered and shimmered in the bright sun and fluttered and rustled in the light summer breeze, as did the leaves of the newly planted 'trees of freedom'. Was it possible, Turgenev thought, that people would be fighting there in five or ten minutes? The whole thing seemed incredible. It was just a comedy. There was no sign of a tragedy that he could see. Then he caught sight of the barricade of cobblestones piled on top of one another, cutting diagonally across the wide thoroughfare, with tricolour flags and a small red flag waving ominously, as he thought, in the wind. He moved closer. The workers mounting the barricades exchanged jokes with the passers-by; one of them had an open bottle of wine in one hand and a half-filled glass in the other and pretended to offer drinks to the people in the street; another workman, armed with a double-barrelled gun, kept shouting in a long-drawn-out voice, 'Long live the national workshops! Long live the democratic and socialist republic!' A tall, blackhaired woman, in a striped dress, with a pistol thrust in her belt, stood beside him; she alone did not laugh. Turgenev and five or six other

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

idlers walked across the street and took up positions at the wall of a tall glove factory. As he stood there waiting and still refusing to believe that anything would happen, the beating of drums drew nearer and nearer and then, suddenly, he saw a column of soldiers appear on the left side of the boulevard, about 200 yards from the barricade. The troops halted, crossed over, and faced the workers on the barricade. A hush fell on the place, voices were lowered, laughter became more abrupt. 'It was', Turgenev described the scene, 'as though a haze had fallen over all the sounds.' A big empty space was suddenly formed between the troops and the barricade, and in this space a little black and white dog was walking about delicately on its thin legs, sniffing the ground round him. Turgenev had noticed earlier that all the Venetian blinds in the windows of the glove factory where he was standing were drawn. What he did not know was that a party of armed insurgents had taken up their positions behind those drawn blinds. Suddenly a shot rang out and was immediately followed by a burst of rifle fire from above his head. Turgenev and his companions took to their heels. They ran along the houses of the boulevard and, reaching the first turning, rushed into a small side street. Turgenev had just enough time to notice a man on all fours in front of the barricade, his cap with the red pompon beside him, and the little black and white dog spinning round and round in the dust. He ran into another street where a small barricade had been put up. A boy of twelve was dancing on top of it and brandishing a curved sword. A big fat national guardsman rushed past, looking pale as a sheet, with blood dripping from his sleeve. . . . The 'tragedy'—the word is significant, for it describes correctly Turgenev's feelings—had begun.

Turgenev's flight at the first exchange of shots between the insurgents and the troops is considered by some of his biographers as typical of him and merely another example of his lack of courage. No doubt Bakunin might have acted differently, and, indeed, Turgenev himself acknowledged it when he added the epilogue to *Rudin* in 1860, that is, four years after the publication of the novel, in which he makes Rudin-Bakunin die on the barricades on 26 June, the third day of the insurrection of 'the national workshops', at a time, too, when the issue of the fighting was no longer in doubt. Turgenev, on the other hand, as he himself observed,

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

considered that it was not his business to fight either on the one or on the other side of the barricades and, after spending the day in the streets as far away from the fighting as possible, went home. To Herzen the thought of joining the insurgents on the barricades did occur (at least he says so), but he too preferred the role of an impartial onlooker, though later the triumph of the French bourgeoisie radically changed his attitude towards Western Europe as the centre of the future social revolution. Had Turgenev been killed on the first day of the insurrection, as he might well have been by a stray bullet, he would have been remembered as a minor poet and playwright and the author of half a dozen brilliant sketches of Russian country life. His influence on Russian and world literature would have been nil. From every point of view, then, he did well not to take any unnecessary risks and to stay in his room during the following four days of the street fighting in Paris.

Turgenev described the days he spent in his room as 'terribly wearisome and painful'. He felt cramped as though he were confined to a prison cell. All the windows had to be kept open as a precaution against an ambush. The heat was unbearable: the sun beat down on the cobbles in the road and the incandescent air streamed through his open window; the sun blinded him; he kept pacing his room like an animal in a cage, unable either to read or write. The streets were deserted. Only occasionally would he catch sight of a small van or a doctor's carriage, or a battery thundering past the house in the direction of the fighting. All day long there was the incessant roar of gunfire and intermittent bursts of rifle-fire—not a single sound of ordinary life. Later in the day he watched the stretcher-bearers carrying the dead or wounded, and the silent and gloomy groups of prisoners, most of them hatless and in rags, being marched past by detachments of the Garde Mobile. In the evening, new and ominous sounds of short, fanlike bursts of rifle fire reached him: firing squads executing the captured insurgents. Unable to bear his confinement any longer, Turgenev went out for a breath of fresh air one morning, but was immediately stopped by a sentry who wanted to arrest him because he had come out without a coat and was wearing only his Russian shirt. 'You are wearing it on purpose to fraternise with the rebels!' the national guardsman shouted. When Turgenev told him that he was a Russian, the

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

sentry became even more suspicious. 'Who knows,' he said, 'you may have gold in your pockets to foment trouble among us!' Turgenev offered to turn out his pockets, but that only made the Frenchman more angry. 'Belief in Russian gold and Russian agents, and other cock-and-bull stories,' Turgenev writes, 'was widespread among all those excited, distracted and bewildered people.'

Turgenev often went down to see Herwegh, who lived in the same house. In his sketch *My Mates Sent Me*, published in a Russian periodical in 1874, Turgenev left a moving portrait of one of the Paris insurgents, a shabbily dressed old man with furrowed, hollow cheeks, who had been sent by his comrades to tell Herwegh that his little son, who had just arrived in Paris with his nurse, was safe and sound in the part of the city still occupied by the rebels. He had braved the perils of the streets to bring this message to a foreigner.

'It was impossible not to admire the unconscious, almost majestic simplicity of his action,' Turgenev writes. 'It evidently never occurred to him that he was doing anything out of the ordinary and that by coming to see Herwegh he was running the risk of being shot. But neither is it impossible to admire those who, in the very thick of a desperate battle which was about to end in their defeat, could remember the anxiety of a stranger, a "bourgeois", and take steps to put his mind at rest. It is true,' Turgenev concludes his sketch, 'that twenty-two years later people like them set Paris on fire and shot their hostages, but anyone with the slightest knowledge of the human heart will not be disconcerted by these contradictions.'

5

Courtavenel, Pauline Viardot's country house—'the cradle of my fame', as Turgenev called it—was not far from the small town of Rozoy, in the Seine and Marne department. It was a modernised castle, built of grey stone in the reign of Francis I, with a steep pitched roof, covered with moss, and large, deep-set windows, which gave it a rather forbidding look. It was separated from the road by an imposing wrought-iron gate and surrounded by a wide moat, overgrown with reeds. Ancient poplars and chestnut trees grew on either side of the drive and in front of the main entrance was a large

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

lawn and beautiful flower beds. Behind the castle was a great park with hot-houses and orchards. In the distance were fields, intersected by streams, copses and woods.

It was at Courtavenel in the summer of 1848 that Turgenev and Pauline Viardot became lovers. Turgenev arrived at Courtavenel towards the end of July and left at the beginning of October for a short journey to the South of France (he had visited Toulon and Hyères). The reason for this journey is unknown. Quite likely Pauline Viardot, who was never in love with him, got tired of him rather quickly and, on one pretext or another, sent him off to the South of France. It is from that time that Turgenev's letters to Pauline Viardot contain passages in German, full of the most extravagant expressions of affection and yet couched in a language which, with one exception, is never too familiar, never the sort of language a lover would use in addressing his mistress. Why did he write them in German? First, no doubt, because German was the language of his romantic youth; secondly, because Louis Viardot did not understand German. The first of these passages occurs in the letter he wrote from Lyons on 13 October. In it he addressed Pauline Viardot as his 'darling angel'—*liebster Engel*—and as 'my only one'—*einziges Wesen*. 'Guten Tag,' the letter begins, '*liebste, beste, theuerste Frau, guten Tag, einziges Wesen.*' He ended his letter with another apostrophe to her in German: '*Die einzige, liebste, Gott segne Sie tausend Mal, Die herzlichsten Gruesse Ihren lieben Wesen,*' and he signed himself: '*Ihr alter theuerer Freund*—your dear old friend.' Only once, nine months later, writing to Pauline Viardot, who was touring England, from Courtavenel, did he use the intimate 'thou': '*Liebe, theuerste, Gott sei mit Dir und segne Dich*—my dearest darling, God be with you and bless you.' It was at that time, too, that a tone of annoyance with Louis Viardot, to whom he had earlier referred as 'a most reasonable man (*homme raisonnable par excellence*)' crept in. 'What does V. want?' he wrote from Courtavenel to Pauline Viardot. 'He doesn't object to my living here, does he? (*Was fehlt V.? ist ihm vielleicht unangenehm, dass ich hier wohne?*)'

Turgenev left Paris on 24 June 1849, for a six weeks' stay at Courtavenel. A few weeks earlier he had imagined that he had fallen ill with cholera, which was raging in Paris at the time. 'Turgenev',

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

Herzen writes in his memoirs, 'was about to leave Paris, as the lease of his room had expired; he came to spend the night at my flat. After dinner he complained of the oppressive heat; I told him that I had had a bathe in the morning, and in the evening he too went for a bathe. When he came back, he felt ill, drank a glass of soda water with wine and sugar and went to bed. In the night he woke me. "I'm done for", he said to me, "cholera." He was indeed sick and had spasms, but fortunately he recovered after ten days of illness.' Considering how terribly he dreaded cholera, Turgenev must have gone through an agonising time, but it is doubtful whether he had suffered even from a mild attack of the disease. He had had a similar upset during his journey to the South of France. Pauline Viardot was in Paris at the time, but she never came to see him. While recovering from his illness, Turgenev composed a song (his first adventure as a composer), '*musique et paroles, ma parole!*' he wrote to Pauline Viardot. The tune came to him quickly: '*vous comprenez: l'inspiration!*' but, alas, he found it difficult to pick it out on the piano, 'and as for writing it down'

Turgenev never discussed his writings with Pauline Viardot in his letters from Courtavenel, though he kept assuring her repeatedly that he was working very hard. The letters are remarkable for conveying his moods and feelings, for an account of his reading, and for the frequent descriptions of nature. There is a long humorous account of a rat hunt in the kitchen as well as detailed accounts of his clearing the moat of reeds, his boating and gardening, his visits to a friendly doctor at Rozoy, his purchase of three leverets with his last franc, his borrowing a few francs from Pauline Viardot's sister-in-law to visit his friends in Paris, his anxiety for Mueller-Struebling and Herzen, following the arrests of many foreign democrats by Louis Napoleon's government. ('The reaction', he wrote, 'is intoxicated with its victory and is about to show itself in all its cynicism.') Here is one of his descriptions of a day at Courtavenel: ' . . . and now we all set to work: Mlle Berthe (the governess) with Louise (Pauline Viardot's little daughter), M. Stiches (Pauline Viardot's uncle) with his newspaper, Mme Stiches I don't know where, and myself in the little study, where I sat down to think over the subject [of a story or a play he was working on at the time]. I thought it over for an hour, then I read Spanish, wrote half a page

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

of the *subject*, and went to the big drawing room, there I was astonished to discover that it was only two o'clock. Then I worked for three-quarters of an hour with Louise, who is beginning to forget her German a little, but who made very few mistakes in her dictation. After that I went for a walk and, on my return, the whole company (myself included) went for a walk till dinner, which we had at five o'clock. Then I slept till nine, thanks to the fatigue of my two walks. At nine o'clock tea was served—which we drank by seasoning this frugal collation with a little honest and innocent conversation on subjects that are perfectly well known and of no interest whatever. Finally, after having enjoyed the society of my fellow creatures for about an hour, a pleasure for which man is said to have been born, we all got up, made our way to the dining room, took our candles, bade each other good night, and went to our respective beds where we fell asleep in the twinkling of an eye. This morning I went for a long walk before breakfast, and am now writing to you between breakfast and billiards'

Soon he was left alone at Courtavenel. One night, at about twelve o'clock, he had just left the drawing room on his way to his bedroom with the light-green wallpaper, when he heard 'two deep sighs' which passed 'like a breath of air' within a few inches of his face. Pauline Viardot's old dog Sultan was peacefully asleep and he was alone in the house. It gave him a slight 'horripilation'. As he walked through the passage he asked himself what he would have done if he had felt a cold hand suddenly seizing one of his hands, and he had to confess that he would have uttered '*un cri d'aigle*'. In spite of his professed rationalism, his imagination was morbidly susceptible to all sorts of 'supernatural' influences he had inherited from his childhood, which were to leave a marked trace on his writings. He was particularly susceptible to sounds. One night he took a little walk in the garden before going to bed. He stopped on the bridge over the moat and began to listen. These, he wrote to Pauline Viardot, were the sounds he heard: 'The noise of blood in my ears and of breathing; the incessant rustling of leaves; the shrill chirping of cicadas: there were four of them in the trees; the light noise made by the fish on the surface of the water, which was like the sound of a kiss; a drop of water falling from time to time with a light silvery sound; the breaking of a branch: who broke it? foot-

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

steps on the road? or the whisper of a human voice? and, suddenly, the thinnest soprano of a mosquito over my ear.'

Natural sights, too, as already observed, were a constant object of observation with him. 'All these days,' he wrote, 'the weather was excellent, but there was a strong wind that grew stronger at times and blew persistently. The movement it produces in the foliage is very beautiful in the poplars; they glittered very proudly in the sun. I must tell you one thing I have noticed, namely that when there is no wind a poplar looks like a schoolboy, and it is a very stupid look, too, except perhaps in the evening against a pink sky when its leaves look almost black. But everything has to be very quiet then—only the leaves on the tops of the trees are allowed to stir gently.' He also amused himself by finding names for different trees: the large chestnut tree in the front of the house he christened Hermann and he looked for a Dorothea for it; a birch tree he thought was very like Gretchen; an oak tree he called Homer; one willow tree 'dirty rascal', another 'anxious virtue', and so on.

His observations of nature sometimes led him to reflect on the meaning of life. 'I have just had a walk round the park,' he wrote. 'It was a lovely night—an unbelievable number of stars—millions of worlds thrown in profusion in the most remote depths of space which are but an infinite expansion of life, a life that is everywhere, that makes a world of plants and insects germinate without rhyme or reason in a drop of water. It is all the product of an irresistible, involuntary and instinctive movement, which cannot act otherwise, it is not the work of a thinking mind. But what is life? Ah, I don't know anything, but I do know that for the moment it is everything. I don't know for how long it will last, but for the moment it exists, it makes my blood course through my veins without my doing anything about it. . . . This indifferent, imperious, voracious, egoistic, all-encroaching thing is life, nature, God—call it what you like, but do not adore it however good and beautiful it is (it isn't always that) and if you do adore it, adore it for its beauty, for its goodness, but not for its grandeur or its glory. For, first, there is nothing big or small so far as it is concerned; secondly, there is no more glory in creation than there is glory in a stone or in water that flows or in a stomach that digests; all that cannot do otherwise than follow the Law of its existence which is Life.'

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

A glimpse into his reading at Courtavenel is provided by the following list of books which he included with his comments in one of his letters to Pauline Viardot: (1) Two volumes of *The Manual of History* by Ott, a Catholic democrat of Buchez's school: 'such an unnatural union can only produce monsters'; (2) a 'detestable' Russian history by Ustryalov, which, however, refreshed many events and dates in his memory; (3) Rotheck's *History of the Middle Ages*, the work of 'a thoughtless, nauseating and false' liberalism: 'people of that sort usually end up by becoming members of the right parties of some Frankfort parliament. Rotheck, fortunately, is dead, but, unfortunately, many people *eiusdem farinae* are still alive'; (4) the *Letters of Lady Montagu* (written in 1717): 'an excellent book, full of grace, intelligence and candour, which makes one like the authoress in spite of her origin'; (5) *Dona Isabel del Solis, novella historica del Martinez de la Rosa*, which he read as an exercise in Spanish: 'let your countrymen pardon me if all their contemporary literature is of the same kind—it's infantile'; (6) the *History of the War in Spain* by General Sarrazin: 'this Frenchman's hatred of the French is too great to be natural: General S. produces on me the impression of a blackguard'; (7) Bausset's *Reminiscences of Napoleon*: 'the work of an elegant flunkey, if a flunkey can be said to be elegant'; (8) Delille's translation of Virgil's *Georgics*: 'I couldn't finish it; it is indeed very colourless, and the Alexandrines run on with an insipid fluidity; they are thin and tasteless like water; besides, the original is not such a miracle, either; all Latin literature is cold and artificial—a real literary literature'; (9) Voltaire's *La Pucelle*, which he found boring, particularly those parts of it which are not supposed to be boring, but 'there are some delicious sayings, daring and witty allusions, biting jibes, revealing the master'; (10) Damas Hinard's great work on Napoleon: 'what a great and mighty organism Napoleon was, what strength of character and what unity of will! And yet there was never a man who belonged so completely to the past. He sums it up completely, but he turns his back on the future—the future which will struggle for a long time to free itself from the chains he forged for it. The monarchy was dying in Europe: it was he who organised the authority, the government, that hideous phantom which, impotent to produce anything, stupid and empty, with the word of Law and Order in its mouth,

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

with a sword in one hand and gold in the other, crushes us all under its iron heel. Damn, what an oriental image!'; and, finally, the Koran, which he had just begun reading and in which he found both grandeur and good sense, but he was afraid that 'its oriental turgidity of style and the vagueness of its prophetic language' would soon make him sick of it.

6

Pauline Viardot returned to Courtavenel in September after a triumphant tour of England ('I want the English to applaud you madly,' Turgenev wrote to her. 'I want them to shout at the top of their voices: "She is wonderful: quite extraordinary. Oh, yes, oh yes!"'¹) She stayed with Turgenev at Courtavenel until the end of October when they went to Paris, remaining there till the early spring of 1850, when she left for Germany. That his relations with Pauline Viardot were never quite happy is shown by his repeated statements in 1848 and 1849 that he was going back to Russia. But there is no direct evidence of the shifting nature of their relationship. Turgenev never discussed his affair with Pauline Viardot with his friends in Paris, a circumstance that rather puzzled Natalie Herzen. There is, however, sufficient evidence in his works to show that it was Pauline Viardot's affairs with other men, or at least with one particular man, that finally decided him to leave her and return home.

There is, first of all, the enigmatic Poem in Prose, entitled *The Rose*, which he wrote in 1878 and which most probably refers to an incident at Courtavenel in the autumn of 1849. It begins by a description of an autumn day in country not unlike Courtavenel. 'She sat at the table in the drawing room,' Turgenev writes, 'and gazed with concentrated attention through the half-open door into the park. I knew what was going on in her heart at the time; I knew that after a short, though painful, struggle, she was at that very moment yielding to a feeling she could no longer resist. Suddenly she got up, went out quickly into the park and disappeared.' After some time Turgenev followed her along the path which he knew she had taken. It was getting dark, but he noticed something lying on the

¹ Written in English.

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

path and, bending down, he picked up a rose—the rose she had been wearing. Returning to the drawing room, he put it on the table in front of her chair. At last she came back and sat down at the table. 'Her face was pale, but it was full of life. Quickly, with gay embarrassment, her lowered eyes, which seemed to have grown small, darted about the room. She saw the rose, snatched it up, gazed at its soiled and crumpled petals, looked up at me, and her eyes glistened with tears.

"Why are you crying?" I asked.

"This rose," she replied, "Look what's happened to it."

Here I tried to give utterance to a profound remark. "Your tears", I said with a meaningful look, "will wash away the mud."

"Tears do not wash—they burn," she replied, and turning to the fireplace, threw the flower into the dying flames.

"The fire will burn better than tears," she cried, not without bravado—and her beautiful eyes, still glistening with tears, laughed arrogantly and happily.

I understood that she, too, was consumed by fire.'

A dramatic evocation of a scene of an emotional crisis transcribed from life, Turgenev acting completely in character (had he not as a young boy followed his father to the house of the girl he himself was so desperately in love with?), and Pauline Viardot's hot Spanish nature yielding to a passion she could not control 'with gay embarrassment' and 'not without bravado'.

But more direct evidence of the character of Turgenev's relations with Pauline Viardot at that particular period will be found in *A Month in the Country*, his most famous play, which he wrote in 1849 and 1850. The relationship between Rakitin and Natalya Petrovna was amazingly what one might expect the relationship between Turgenev and Pauline Viardot to have been at that time. Indeed, with that 'love of self-castigation' of his, Turgenev has written the history of those early days of his great love in his greatest play. The ages of Rakitin and Natalya Petrovna are practically identical with those of Turgenev and Pauline Viardot. In the list of characters Rakitin is described as 'a friend of the family', the exact description applied to Turgenev by Pauline Viardot's friends. (Gounod, who stayed at Courtavenel in May, 1850, where he met Turgenev, described him as '*un excellent et intime ami de la famille*'.)

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

Natalya Petrovna's husband, Arcady Islayev, too, plays the identical part in the play that Louis Viardot played in life.¹

At the very beginning of Act I Turgenev's peculiar attitude to Pauline Viardot, his utter submission to all her wishes and whims, is described in a few lines of dialogue between Rakitin and Natalya Petrovna.

RAKITIN. I agree with you.

NATALYA PETROVNA. How awfully boring. You always agree with me. Read, please.²

RAKITIN. Oh, so you want me to have an argument with you, do you? Very well.

NATALYA PETROVNA. *I want—I want! I want you to want.* Read, I tell you.

RAKITIN. Yes, ma'am.

Or take this description by Natalya Petrovna of the character of their talks:

NATALYA PETROVNA. Sometimes we talk as though we were making lace. Do you know how lace is made? In stuffy rooms, without moving from one's place. Lace is an excellent thing, but a draught of cold water on a hot day is much better.

RAKITIN. I'm afraid you're—

NATALYA PETROVNA. I'm what?

RAKITIN. You're angry with me today—

NATALYA PETROVNA. Oh, you clever people, how unperceptive you are in spite of all your cleverness! No, I'm not angry with you.

And a little further on, after Natalya Petrovna's proposal that they should 'finish' the education of Belyayev, the young student with whom she had fallen in love (the new type of Russian of modest origin modelled partly on Belinsky) and her remark that he was quite unlike them, she says, as indeed Pauline Viardot must have said many times to Turgenev: 'Our whole trouble, my friend, is that all we do is to study ourselves with great diligence and then

¹ The idea that *A Month in the Country* derives from Balzac's play *La Mardre* is pure 'academic' guesswork. It was life and not literature that furnished Turgenev with the plot of this play, and that is why it is so different from all his other plays.

² Turgenev always read to Pauline Viardot at Courtavenel.

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

imagine that we know people.' Rakitin feels hurt and remarks, as Turgenev might have done in real life—

RAKITIN. . . . Why do you go on hurting me?

NATALYA PETROVNA. Well, who else is one to hurt if not one's friends? And you are my friend, aren't you? You know you are. (*Presses his hand.*) You're an old friend of mine.

RAKITIN. What I'm afraid of is that—that you will get sick of this old friend of yours.

NATALYA PETROVNA (*laughing*). You only get sick of good things. . . .

RAKITIN. Perhaps. . . . But that doesn't make it easier for one.

NATALYA PETROVNA. There! (*lowering her voice*). As though you did not know—*ce que vous êtes pour moi*.

RAKITIN. You play with me like a cat with a mouse. . . . But the mouse doesn't mind.

NATALYA PETROVNA. Oh, you poor little mouse!

Quite an authentic touch that! And here is another revealing passage, also from Act I of the play, which describes exactly the nature of Pauline Viardot's feelings towards Turgenev:

NATALYA PETROVNA. Yes—I love you, but do you know, Rakitin, do you know what sometimes strikes me as funny? I love you and yet my feeling for you is so serene, so peaceful. . . . It doesn't agitate me—it warms me, but—(*Quickly*) You've never made me cry¹ and I—I think that I ought to have—(*interrupting herself*). What does it mean?

RAKITIN (*a little sadly*). Such a question needs no answer.

NATALYA PETROVNA (*pensively*). And yet I've known you such a long time.

RAKITIN. Four years.² Yes, we're old friends.

NATALYA PETROVNA. Friends? No, you're more than a friend.

RAKITIN. Please, let's change the subject. I'm afraid for my happiness—I'm afraid that it might vanish under your hands.

NATALYA PETROVNA. No, no, no. The trouble is you're too good—you're too indulgent to me—you've spoilt me. You're too good, do you hear?

RAKITIN (*with a smile*). Yes, ma'am.

¹ Compare this with the Poem in Prose, *The Rose*.

² Exactly the time Pauline Viardot had known Turgenev.

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

NATALYA PETROVNA (*looking at him*). I don't know about you, but I—I don't want any other happiness. Many people would envy me. (*Holding out her hands to him*) Don't you think so?

RAKITIN. I'm in your power. Do what you like with me.

Again in Act II there is this characteristic accusation Natalya-Viardot makes against Rakitin-Turgenev: 'The man is observing me from morning till evening', followed by the shrewd thrust: 'I can see now that you're not so perceptive after all', and a little later, in reference to another character in the play, 'Why, haven't you been observing him?' What follows is the most illuminating piece of 'self-castigation' in the play: Turgenev, whose letters to Viardot from Courtavenel are full of descriptive passages, is writing, as it were, a malicious skit on himself.

RAKITIN. Look, how beautiful this dark-green oak is set against the dark blue sky. It is all flooded with sunshine—and what powerful colours! How much indestructible life and strength there is in that tree, especially if you compare it with this young birch-tree, which seems to be ready to dissolve in its own radiance; its little leaves shine with a kind of liquid glitter—they almost seem to melt, and yet the birch-tree, too, is beautiful.

NATALYA PETROVNA [pricking the bubble of Turgenev's literary conceit]. Do you know what, Rakitin? I've noticed it for some time. . . . You have a very fine feeling for the so-called beauties of nature and you talk of them very cleverly, very elegantly—so cleverly and so elegantly, indeed, that, I suppose, nature ought to be infinitely grateful to you for your exquisitely apt expressions; you run after her like some perfumed marquis in red heels after some pretty peasant girl. Only the trouble is, you see, that I can't help feeling sometimes that nature would never be able to understand and appreciate your ingenious remarks just as the peasant girl would not understand the courtly compliments paid her by the marquis. Nature is much simpler, even coarser, than you think because, thank goodness, she is healthy. Birch trees do not melt and do not faint like hysterical ladies.

RAKITIN. *Quelle tirade!* Nature is healthy, or to put it differently, I'm morbid.

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

NATALYA PETROVNA. You're not the only one who is morbid: neither of us is healthy.

RAKITIN. Oh, I, too, know this method of saying the most disagreeable things in a most inoffensive manner. Instead of, for instance, telling someone straight in the face: Look here, old fellow, you're a damn fool:—you've only got to say to him with a most amiable smile: My dear fellow, we're both of us awfully stupid.

NATALYA PETROVNA. You're not offended, are you? What nonsense! All I wanted to say was that both of us are—well, if you object to 'morbid'—that both of us are old, very old. . . .

And a few lines later she turns on him—just as Pauline Viardot might have done—with the withering remark: 'What's the use of your intellect if it's not amusing! There is nothing more tiresome than a gloomy intellect.' Again: could there be anything more revealing of Turgenev's state of mind as he mused unhappily on his relations with Pauline Viardot than the following passage from Rakitin's soliloquy in Act II?

RAKITIN. . . . Oh, how ridiculous are the people who have only one thought in their minds—one purpose, one occupation in life. Take me, for example. She was right: all day long you keep observing trifles till you become trifling yourself. That's true enough—but I can't live without her; in her presence I am more than happy; this feeling cannot be called happiness—I am all hers; to part from her would, without exaggeration, be like parting from life itself. . . . I have never deceived myself: I know very well how much she loves me, but I hoped that with time this tranquil feeling—I hoped! But what right have I to hope? How dare I hope? I admit my position is ridiculous—almost contemptible. (*After a short pause.*) How cleverly she stung me: my 'exquisitely apt' expressions! She's very clever, especially when she is in a foul temper. (What an excellent description of Pauline Viardot!)

And, finally, this shrewd analysis of his own character: 'It's not for the first time, my dear fellow, that after a long preoccupation with your own self, you suddenly renounce all your arguments and suppositions and, folding your hands calmly in your lap, wait

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

quietly for what's going to happen. Meanwhile, confess, you feel damned awkward and painful. . . . Such is your trade.'

As for the answer to the questions that have puzzled many of Turgenev's biographers, namely, why he kept on going back to Pauline Viardot and what was the mysterious hold she had over him, it may be found in this avowal of Natalya Petrovna's in Act III:

NATALYA PETROVNA. . . . Believe me, Michel, whatever I may say or do, there is not a single man in the whole world I rely on as much as I do on you. (*Lowering her voice*) I don't love anyone—like that. (*A short pause*) You don't believe me?

RAKITIN. I believe you. But why are you so sad today? What's the matter with you?

NATALYA PETROVNA (*without listening to him*). I'm sure of only one thing, Rakitin: you can never answer for yourself and you can never be sure of anything. We very often do not understand our past—how can we be answerable for our future?

But when Rakitin offers to stay on for a few days after Belyayev's departure, she at once rebuffs him: 'You're hoping that I'll come to my senses—that I'll come back to you—but you're wrong.' And in the soliloquy that follows, she bursts out: 'Oh, how I hate that clever fellow!' a sentiment she is quick to disavow in her following brief soliloquy, though hardly to Turgenev's advantage: 'He is an honourable man—but have I ever really loved him?' The answer is obvious, and Turgenev knew it. Indeed, Turgenev-Rakitin draws the only possible conclusion in Act V: 'In my opinion,' he says to the young student, 'love, whether happy or unhappy, is a real calamity if you give yourself up wholly to it. You wait! I don't suppose you know as yet how these delicate little hands can torture you, with what tender solicitude they can tear your heart to pieces. You wait! You'll find out how much blazing hatred is hidden beneath the most ardent love! You'll think of me when, like a sick man praying to get well again, you are yearning to have your peace of mind restored to you, when you will envy every man who is carefree and lighthearted. You wait! You'll find out what it means to belong to a petticoat, what it means to be enslaved, to be infected—and how shameful and weary such slavery is! . . .'

And the conclusion Turgenev drew from this faithful description

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

of his own state of mind? 'It is time', he makes Rakitin say at the end of the play, 'to put an end to these morbid, these consumptive relations.' That, at least, was his intention when he left Paris for Russia on 24 June 1850.

In addition to the two plays—*Carelessness* and *A Month in the Country*—and the story *Petushkov*, in which Turgenev dealt with his relationship with Pauline Viardot, he wrote *A Correspondence* early in 1850, in which, as already pointed out, he attempted to describe the first impact of his meeting with the woman whose 'slave' he had become. The story, which was only published six years later, completes Turgenev's analysis of one of the deepest emotional experiences of his life. It is as though he had tried to rid himself of the terrible incubus of his all-absorbing passion for a woman who could never give him the happiness he yearned for, by displaying it in all its horrible and humiliating aspects. It is significant, however, that in none of these plays or stories did he touch on what was for him perhaps intrinsically the most fascinating part of Pauline Viardot's attraction—her great art as a singer and actress. In *A Correspondence*, it is true, the heroine, too, is an artist, but in a branch of art—the ballet—that he could not appreciate. The powerful impact of poetry and music on the imagination he began to explore later in such stories as *Three Meetings*, *A Backwater*, *Faust*, *The Song of Triumphant Love*, and *Clara Milich*.

7

By the time Turgenev left France for Russia he had written most of the stories of *The Diary of a Sportsman* and all but one of his plays. *The Weakest Link*, the chief character of which is to a certain extent autobiographical, he finished by the end of 1847. He read it to Annenkov and another friend and was surprised at their reaction. 'Both of them were convulsed with laughter,' he wrote to Pauline Viardot. 'I positively did not suspect that I had a humorous talent!' His next two comedies, *The Parasite*, in two acts, and *The Bachelor*, in three acts, he wrote expressly for Mikhail Shchepkin, the famous actor and producer of the Moscow Maly Theatre. Here he at once fell foul of the censorship, which had become very strict, especially after the events of 1848 in Europe. *The Parasite* was banned on the

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

ground of its 'utter immorality' and its attacks against the Russian nobility which, the censor claimed, was represented 'in a highly unfavourable light'. *The Bachelor* was more fortunate: it was first performed in Petersburg on 14 October 1849, and in Moscow on 25 January 1850, but, as Turgenev wrote, it only had a *succès d'estime*. His one-act comedy *Lunch at the Marshal's*, which he wrote in the summer of 1849, was also banned by the censorship because it did not show sufficient respect for the nobility. His great 'psychological' five-act comedy *A Month in the Country* he began in April 1849 and finished shortly before his departure from France. Its first version, entitled *The Student*, was banned by the censorship on grounds of immorality. At the insistence of the censor and the editors of *The Contemporary Review*, who were anxious to publish the play, Turgenev reluctantly agreed to cut out the part of the husband and transform the wife into a widow. It was published in this distorted form in January 1855 under the title of *Two Women*. In a brief introduction Turgenev wrote that 'the play was never intended for the stage. It is not really a comedy, but a short novel in a dramatic form'. Turgenev restored the original text of the play for the first edition of his works, in which it was published under its well-known title of *A Month in the Country*. It was performed for the first time in Moscow in 1872 and in Petersburg in 1879, in a version specially adapted for the stage by the Russian playwright Victor Krylov.

The only Turgenev comedy that was an instantaneous success was *The Provincial Lady*, which he wrote at the end of 1850 in Petersburg, for the actress Samoylova. Turgenev was present at its first performance in Moscow on 18 January 1851. He had to answer many calls and in the end was so overwhelmed by the tumultuous reception of his play that he ran away from the theatre, 'as though', he wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'I had a thousand devils at my heels. I was very sorry to have run away,' he went on, 'because people might think that I was a nervous fellow. . . . When the curtain rose on the first scene,' he told Pauline Viardot, 'I uttered your name in a very low voice and it brought me luck.'

A play Turgenev never finished was the five-act comedy *The Governess*, which he later turned into his first novel, *Two Generations*, of which only the fragment *Her Ladyship's Private Office* is

Courtavenel—'The Cradle of my Fame'

extant. In his letters, the titles of seven more plays are mentioned, but he never attempted to write them.

Turgenev himself is very frank about the reason why he gave up writing plays. 'In publishing for the first time a collected edition of my plays and comedies,' he wrote in his brief introduction to the sixth volume of the first edition of his works published in 1869, 'I feel it is my duty to ask my readers for their indulgence. Not possessing any dramatic talent, I would not have given in to the demands of my publishers, who were anxious to issue as complete an edition of my works as possible, had I not thought that my plays, unsatisfactory as they are on the stage, would be of some interest to some person who might like to read them. I may be mistaken even about that; let the public judge.' In a letter to his English translator W.R.S. Ralston on 14 February 1869, he was even more outspoken. 'I must say', he declared, 'that the publication of my comedies, which do not show the slightest dramatic talent, is something that fills me with the greatest displeasure; I gave in reluctantly to the insistent demands of my publishers, thinking that my plays might gain in reading.'

It has been argued by some critics that Turgenev's reluctance to acknowledge the merits of his plays was merely another instance of his severe self-criticism. But would Turgenev have given up writing plays and even gone so far as to convert his last play into a novel, if he had really possessed dramatic talent? Whenever his plays have been performed successfully on the stage, they have either been adapted, that is to say, turned into a dramatic work by the producer, as for instance by Stanislavsky¹, or owed their success to some great actor, such as Martynov, who, Turgenev wrote, 'transformed the pale figure of Moshkin, by the force of his great genius, into a living and moving character.'

The importance of this brief period of play-writing for the development of Turgenev's genius as a novelist should not, however, be underestimated. While his 'exercises', as he called it, as a poet had made him into one of the greatest prose stylists in Russian literature, his work on his plays had taught him how to write the highly polished dialogue of his novels. Indeed, the dialogue of his novels is of a brilliance such as he never attained in his plays.

¹ See my *Stanislavsky: A Life* (MacGibbon & Kee) p.p. 304-311.

PART FIVE

The Russian Sphinx

2

Varvara Petrovna made her last appeal to Turgenev to return to Russia after Nicholas I had issued his manifesto of 14 March 1848, calling upon 'every loyal citizen to fight the revolution in France'. When he refused to comply, she stopped sending him money as well as writing to him. 'My break with my mother is complete,' Turgenev wrote to Krayevsky, the editor of *Home Annals* who had advanced him 500 roubles, 'and I shall now have to earn my daily bread.' His mother had in the meantime thought of a characteristic way of getting her own back on her favourite son, her Benjamin, as she called him. She took his seven-year-old daughter away from her mother and kept her at Spasskoye as a kitchen maid. Occasionally she would have the little girl washed, dressed in fine clothes and brought into the drawing room. She would then ask her women companions who little Pelageya reminded them of and having received the expected reply that she was the spit and image of *Vanichka* (the little girl's resemblance to Turgenev was indeed extraordinary), she would have her sent back to the kitchen to be mocked at by the servants. Turgenev knew nothing of that, and indeed it is doubtful whether he ever thought of his little daughter. But he did think a great deal of his mother. The secret fears and hopes which centred round her, the powerful attraction he felt towards her and his no less powerful impulse to free himself from her influence, are revealed in a remarkable dream he had at Courtavenel in August 1849. The dream was so vivid that he described it in detail in a letter to Pauline Viardot and used it six years later as the basis for his story *Phantoms*. In his dream he

The Russian Sphinx

saw himself walking along a country road bordered on either side by tall poplar trees. It was getting dark and he felt very tired, but to arrive at his destination he had to sing five hundred times *A la voix de ta mère* (In the voice of your mother). . . . He was hurrying to finish his task, but soon lost count. Suddenly he saw a tall white figure coming towards him and signalling him to follow. 'Good Lord,' he said to himself, 'this is my brother Anatole,' (he never had a brother of that name), but he found it all very natural and followed the white figure. A few moments later he felt a strong wind blowing in his face. He looked round and, in spite of the darkness, saw that he was standing on the top of a high cliff overlooking the sea. 'Where are we going?' he asked his guide. 'We are birds,' was the reply. 'Let's be off.' 'Birds?' he echoed in astonishment. 'Blow your nose,' the guide said. He was about to comply when he found that he had a long beak with a pouch beneath it, like a pelican. But at that very moment the wind raised him up from the ground and he felt an indescribable thrill as he spread out his wings and flew with a cry of triumph over the sea. 'At that moment,' he wrote, 'I *was* a bird, and my recollection of last night's dinner is not half as vivid as that of my sensations as a bird: that is, not only vivid and distinct in the memory of my brain, if I may put it that way, but also in that of my entire body, which only goes to show that *la vida es sueño, y el sueño es la vida*.' The scene that unrolled itself before his eyes as he hovered in the air was breathtaking: it was the sea, immense, agitated, sombre, with faint gleams of light far below; here and there he could just make out the dim shapes of ships and of high, precipitous cliffs, and sometimes a distant roar would reach his ears; he flew down nearer to the surface of the sea, but the noise frightened him and he flew up again into the clouds, which, driven by a high wind, rolled crashing past him. From time to time an enormous white plume of water rose from the bosom of the sea (*s'élançait du sein de la mer*), and he could feel the foam splashing his face, then all of a sudden he saw great flashes of light far away below him. Oh, he said to himself, those were the marine lightnings Galileo discovered. They were not as swift as the lightnings in the air because water was so much heavier and more difficult to displace. In the light of those flashes he could see the sea (*la mer*) illumined to the very bottom and he saw huge black fish with enor-

The Russian Sphinx

mous heads rise slowly to the surface. He had to alight on the sea and feed on the fish, he said to himself, but he felt so horrified at the thought that he could not bring himself to do it. The fish were too big, anyway. Suddenly he saw the sea go all white and begin to boil and bubble, and a pink radiance spread all round him. It was the sun rising, he thought. As the disc of the sun rose from the sea everything round him flashed and glittered and he felt a stifling heat. His feathers began to get scorched and he was seized by a feeling of unbearable anguish and woke up.

Apart from its literary interest, this dream, of which Turgenev preserved so distinct a recollection, is significant for expressing in rich imaginative language the conflict which centred round his mother and which remained unresolved throughout his life. Thirty-four years later the same marine monsters emerged in his delirium during his last illness. By that time the curiously involved pattern of his relationship with his mother had become interwoven with that of his relationship with Pauline Viardot: both women exercised a powerful influence over him in which the emotional and intellectual sides of his character were constantly pulling in different directions.

In the summer of 1850 Varvara Petrovna's health deteriorated and she relented at last and sent him 6,000 roubles to pay his debts and return home. In May he went for a few days to Courtavenel to take leave of the place which had become a second home to him. 'Russia', he wrote to Pauline Viardot, who was in Germany at the time, 'is awaiting me—this immense and sombre figure, motionless and veiled like the sphinx of Oedipus. She will swallow me up later. I think I can see her fix me with her inert, cod-fish glare, as it behoves the eyes of a rock. Don't worry, sphinx, I shall come back to you and you will be able to devour me at your leisure if I fail to solve your riddle! Leave me in peace for a little while longer! I shall come back to your steppes!'

2

Turgenev was welcomed cordially enough by Varvara Petrovna, but there was no change in their relations. She kept a tight hold of her money and a few months before her death played a cruel joke on her two sons. She appeared to give in to their demand to transfer

The Russian Sphinx

two of her estates to them and even went so far as to draw up the necessary deeds, but she refused to legalise them. In the meantime she had instructed the bailiffs of the two estates to sell all the corn. It seems she was acting on the spur of the moment without realising herself what she was doing. In the evening she summoned her two sons to her drawing-room. When they came in Varvara Petrovna was laying out patience. Her adopted daughter and one of her companions were having dinner next door. Turgenev sat down on one side of his mother and Nicholas on the other. They were given cups of tea which they stirred nervously. Varvara Petrovna went on laying out her cards and discussing quietly the different brands of tea she was getting from her grocer's, the two gigantic figures of her sons towering over her slight, shrivelled figure. Then she called for her manager who came in carrying two sealed envelopes on a tray. She handed one of them to Nicholas and the other to Turgenev. 'Well,' she said, holding out her hand to them to be kissed, 'now you can thank me.' Nicholas bent stiffly over his mother's hand and kissed it in silence. Turgenev got up, took a turn round the room, said, '*Bonne nuit, maman*', and went out without kissing her hand. Varvara Petrovna said nothing, but her hands shook. Nicholas, too, went out and rushed up to Turgenev's room. They opened the envelopes. The deeds were there, but they were still invalid. They decided not to accept the estates but to demand their father's estate of Turgenevo, to which, of course, they had a legal right. Next morning Varvara Petrovna summoned Turgenev to her room. This time he told her exactly what he thought of her. 'Get out,' Varvara Petrovna screamed. 'I have no children!' Turgenev tried to see her next day, but when Varvara Zhitov, on whom she had recently been showering expensive presents, came in to announce him, she seized his portrait as a young man from the table and flung it on the floor with such force that the glass was shattered. She would not let the parlour maid pick it up. It remained lying on the floor for the next three months.

The two brothers left for Turgenevo the same day and two months later (at the end of September) Turgenev left for Petersburg.

Turgenev knew very well why his mother was so angry with him. When he returned from abroad and saw how badly his little

The Russian Sphinx

daughter was being treated by his mother, he felt that it was his duty to do something for her. He wrote at once to Pauline Viardot who offered to take the eight-year-old girl and bring her up as one of her family. Turgenev at once made all the necessary arrangements and sent her off to France. 'Heavens', he wrote to Pauline Viardot after the news of the safe arrival of Paulinette (as he had re-christened her) had reached him, 'how fortunate this little girl is! I hope this great change in her life will save her. . . . I am very happy you found she looks like me and that this pleased you. . . . It is absolutely essential', he wrote two months later, 'that she should adore you, her salvation lies in that feeling, it will make a new person of her, and if she possesses any good instincts, she will not be able to help adoring you. I implore you: when you receive this letter, call in Paulinette and let her kiss both your hands—do you hear?—*both* hands, and think of me while she is enjoying this great felicity!' And after receiving a detailed report of little Pauline's progress in December, he wrote to Pauline Viardot: 'Well, if *our* daughter is such a nice and loving child, all the better. You see, I told you she would adore you—I felt it with all my heart. Besides, it could not be otherwise. *Sie ist ja meine Tochter* (she is, after all, my daughter).'

Poor Paulinette! It is not surprising that in the end she got to hate Pauline Viardot with a deep and abiding hatred.

His resolve to put an end to his relations with Pauline Viardot seems to have disappeared entirely on his return to Russia. 'I pray to heaven to send me patience,' he wrote to her from Petersburg, 'and not to put off too long the thrice blessed moment when I shall see you again.' And he added in German, '*Ich bin immer derselbe und werde es ewig bleiben*' (I am always the same and shall remain so for ever). And yet—he could not deceive himself for long. 'Oh,' he wrote to her in December, 'if only I could see you in my dreams! This happened to me four days ago. I dreamt that I had come back to Courtavenel during the floods. The lawn in front of the house was covered with water in which huge fish were swimming about. I entered the hall, I saw you, I held out my hands to you, and you burst out laughing. That laugh of yours hurt my feelings badly.' A prophetic dream, but it was not till six years later that Turgenev was to discover how prophetic it was.

The Russian Sphinx

Meanwhile they corresponded frequently and at great length. Turgenev evidently did not expect her to write such long letters to him, so full, as he put it, of charming and subtle wit. In one of her letters she asked him the meaning of Beauty. 'Beauty', he replied from Turgenevo, 'is the only thing that is immortal, and so long as there remains a trace of its material manifestation, its immortality goes on. But nowhere does it shine with such intensity as in the human individuality; it is there that it speaks most to the intelligence, and that is why I shall always prefer a great musical power served by a defective voice to a beautiful but stupid voice, a voice the beauty of which is only material!' This is the first indication to be found in Turgenev's letters that Pauline Viardot's voice, which she had been forcing too much during her meteoric career on the operatic stage, was losing its freshness.

It was from Turgenevo, too, that Turgenev described to Pauline Viardot his meeting with a fascinating four-year-old girl, the natural daughter of his uncle Nicholas, who was to become the model for Assya, the heroine of the short story he wrote in 1857. Her name was Anne, and Turgenev studied her with great interest. 'The way she turns her head and moves her eyebrows when she hears something that strikes her as strange,' he wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'arouses my admiration. She has an air of submitting whatever she hears to her little intellect and she gives you such astonishing replies. . . . She is very affectionate and very sensitive. . . . I assure you it is a most strange little creature.'

It was in the vicinity of Turgenevo that Turgenev was present at the contest between two village singers which he described in one of the finest stories of *The Diary of a Sportsman*. 'The childhoods of all peoples are alike,' he wrote to Pauline Viardot from Petersburg, 'and my singers reminded me of Homer. Then I stopped thinking about that, for otherwise the pen would have dropped out of my hand. The contest took place in a public house, and there were many original characters there which I tried to draw in the spirit of Teniers [a painter Turgenev greatly admired, as Dostoevsky is so careful to note in *The Devils*].'

In Petersburg Turgenev was working hard. 'I was never so busy as I am now,' he told Pauline Viardot. He was staying at the Panayevs', together with Botkin and Druzhinin, the novelist and

The Russian Sphinx

critic, another one of his close friends. He had grown sidewhiskers and his hair was already streaked with grey. At breakfast he would sit in his hunting tunic with the green collar, leaning against the table, a cup of coffee before him, Botkin sitting beside him, wearing a dressing-gown lined with squirrel fur and drinking tea, and Nekrasov, who had by then taken over the *Contemporary Review* as well as Panayev's pretty wife, walking up and down the room trying to persuade Turgenev not to give any of his stories to Krayevsky. But Turgenev was so badly in need of money that, much as he disliked the editor of *Home Annals* for his lack of aesthetic feelings, he kept running to him for an advance on some story he was planning to write. The last story he published in *Home Annals* was *The Diary of a Superfluous Man*, which he had finished in France and which supplied Russian literature with the term of 'superfluous man' and a long line of fictitious characters, the last of which was the hero of Chekhov's play *Ivanov*.

3

Meanwhile Varvara Petrovna fell dangerously ill in Moscow. She was bedridden for many months, suffering from dropsy, but apparently nobody thought of writing to Turgenev about it. She had a shelf made along the whole length of her bed and kept writing her orders to the bailiffs of her estates and jotting down notes in her diary. On 28 October, the birthday of Turgenev, she ordered his portrait to be picked up from the floor of the drawing room. In her diary she wrote: '*Mes enfants! Pardonnez-moi. Et vous, Seigneur, pardonnez-moi aussi—car l'orgueil, ce péché mortel, fût toujours mon péché.*'¹ But her pride still prevented her from summoning her favourite son to her bedside. Nicholas succeeded in getting admitted to her shortly before she died, but it was only after she had received extreme unction that she asked for Turgenev, who got the summons on the day she died—28 November—and was just in time for her funeral. 'May the Lord save us from such a death,' Turgenev wrote to Pauline Viardot. 'She was merely trying to stupefy herself. A short time before she died, she ordered her

¹ My children, forgive me. And you, O Lord, forgive me too—for pride, this mortal sin, has always been my sin.

The Russian Sphinx

orchestra to play dance music in the next room. It is proper to talk of the dead with respect and pity and that is why I will say nothing more. But as I must tell you what I know and feel, I'll add one thing more: my mother thought of nothing else in her last months except (I'm ashamed to say it) of ruining us—my brother and myself. In her last letter to the manager of her estates she gave him clear and precise orders to sell everything for a song, to burn everything, if need be! . . . And yet I feel that it could have been so easy for her to make us love her. . . .' A few days later, after he had had time to read his mother's diary, he wrote: ' . . . What a woman, my dear friend, what a woman! I could not close my eyes all night. May the Lord forgive her for everything! But what a life! Truly, I'm deeply shocked. Yes, yes, we must be good and just, if only in order not to die as she died. . . .'

Turgenev was now a rich man. After the division of their inheritance with his elder brother, he was left with eleven estates of about 30,000 acres, including Spasskoye with its 3,000 acres. The total annual income from these estates amounted to 25,000 roubles. He at once introduced certain changes which at the time would have been considered revolutionary. He freed all his household serfs and tried to persuade his peasants to pay him an annual rent for the land they leased from him instead of working on his land for three days a week without payment.

Though he could afford it now, he did not hurry abroad to be with Pauline Viardot. Indeed, a year later he admitted in a letter to her that when leaving France he had known very well that he was leaving her for a long time, if not for ever. Instead, he went to Petersburg where his drawing-room became the gathering place for literary celebrities, famous actors and actresses, university professors and society people. He was preparing the stories of his *Diary of a Sportsman* for publication (he had wanted to dedicate it to Pauline Viardot, but she did not seem to be particularly anxious to grant him 'such happiness' even though he promised not to publish her name but to put 'three asterisks for the public'), and writing the few last stories for it, such as *The Rendez-vous*, *Bezhin Meadow*, and *Kassyan from Krassivaya Mech*. The last story demanded care since its hero was really a fugitive sectarian who was against the State and the Church. 'In the chief character of my story', Turgenev

The Russian Sphinx

wrote to a correspondent in March 1851, 'there is a great deal that remains unsaid and I should like to know whether you realised what it was really about?' He was getting ready to write his first novel. 'I intend to publish nothing for a long time,' he wrote in the same letter, 'and devote myself as much as possible to a big work, which I shall write *con amore* and at leisure—without any *arrière-pensées* about the censorship—whatever happens!' Turgenev was also to be seen at all sorts of social gatherings, including a masked ball, which he described in *Three Meetings*, a story he wrote during that year in which the *motif* of an Italian song supplies the emotional undertone.

It was in the spring of 1851 that Turgenev took a fancy to a serf girl by the name of Feoktista, a maid of one of his cousins, who may have reminded him of Pauline Viardot—she, too, was a slender and not particularly pretty brunette with small hands and feet and a violent temper. Turgenev offered to buy her freedom, and his cousin, seeing how interested he was in her maid, demanded a high price for her. Turgenev took her to Petersburg and then to Spasskoye where he lived with her in 1852 and 1853. Eventually he got her married to a minor official in the Ministry of the Navy, 'a very meek and decent fellow', he described him in a letter to a friend many years later. When Feoktista left him, she was with child and she gave birth to a son Ivan in Moscow, who might have been Turgenev's child. Turgenev himself, however, declared that he had good grounds for believing that he was not the father. Feoktista placed her son in an orphanage and several years later tried in vain to trace his whereabouts. She visited Turgenev at Spasskoye, and he promised to pay for the boy's education in a trade school; but he was never found.

Some of Turgenev's biographers suggest that his attachment to Feoktista was much more serious than it would appear from so short a liaison. Turgenev tried to educate her, but she would fly into a temper and their lessons would end in violent scenes. It was not that, however, that had cooled his ardour for her. Already in December 1851 he wrote to a friend: 'Alas, even immorality is no remedy against boredom. . . . She begins to bore me terribly but there is nothing to be done about it.' He was at the time recovering from a slight attack of pneumonia and was not feeling particularly

The Russian Sphinx

bright. 'I'm sick of Petersburg,' he wrote to the same correspondent, 'and I'm sick of my own body—clumsy, old and ugly. . . . I am as fond of you and the Countess¹ as a man who almost hates himself is capable of being fond of another human being.'

Turgenev was certainly strongly attracted to Feoktista, but, as his reference to her shows, he could hardly have been seriously in love with her; it was more likely that he kept up the liaison as a sort of homoeopathic cure for a feeling he was quite determined to get rid of at all costs.

4

On 20 October 1851 (O.S.), Shchepkin took Turgenev, who was in Moscow at the time, to see Gogol. A week before, Turgenev had caught a fleeting glimpse of Gogol at a performance of *The Government Inspector*. Gogol had sat in a box behind two stalwart old ladies, peering nervously at the stage. When Turgenev had turned round to look at him, he quickly hid himself in a corner of the box. Turgenev knew of course that in Moscow Gogol was looked upon as a man who was touched in the head, but there was nothing of the madman in Gogol that he could notice. He was dressed neatly in a dark coat, a green velvet waistcoat and brown trousers, and he behaved perfectly normally. He shook hands with Turgenev, saying, 'We should have become acquainted long ago.' Gogol had, in fact, been very interested in Turgenev. Three years earlier he wrote to Annenkov: 'Describe to me what Turgenev looks like so that I could get an idea of him as a man. I know him to a certain extent as a writer and as far as I can judge he possesses a *remarkable* talent and promises to do great things in future.' More recently he had told some friends: 'Turgenev is more talented than any of our living writers.'

Turgenev sat down beside Gogol on a large sofa and Shchepkin in an armchair facing him. Turgenev scrutinised the great writer closely. 'His fair hair,' he wrote in his literary reminiscences, 'which fell straight from the temples, as is usual with Cossacks, still preserved its youthful tint, though it had perceptibly thinned; his

¹ Countess Salias—a Moscow novelist, whose long novel *The Niece* he had reviewed in the *Contemporary*.

The Russian Sphinx

white, smooth, receding forehead exuded intelligence, his small brown eyes sparkled with gaiety at times—gaiety and not sarcasm, but mostly they looked tired; his long sharp nose gave Gogol's face a cunning, fox-like look; his soft, puffy lips under the cropped moustache also produced an unfavourable impression—their indefinite outline expressed—at least, so it seemed to me—the dark side of his character; when he spoke, they opened unpleasantly, revealing a row of bad teeth; his little chin disappeared in his wide black velvet cravat.' There was something in Gogol's bearing which reminded Turgenev of a teacher in a provincial secondary school. 'What an intelligent, queer and sick creature you are!' he thought.

Gogol spoke of the importance of literature, the vocation of a writer, and what a writer's attitude towards his work ought to be. He also made a few pertinent remarks on what Turgenev called 'the physiology of fiction'. It was only when Gogol began praising the censorship as an excellent means for developing a writer's skill in defending 'the child of his brains' that Turgenev began to feel that there was an unbridgeable gulf between Gogol's outlook and his. It was not the same things they hated nor the same things they loved, 'but', he writes, 'at that moment this seemed of no importance to me. A great poet, a great artist stood before me, and I looked at him and listened to him with veneration even when I disagreed with him.'

Four months later, Gogol died. 'A great misfortune has befallen us,' Turgenev wrote to Pauline Viardot on 21 February 1852: 'Gogol has died in Moscow after having burnt everything—everything—the second volume of *Dead Souls*, a mass of things begun or completed—everything, in fact. You can hardly appreciate what a cruel blow his death has been to us. There is not a Russian whose heart does not bleed at this moment. He was more than just a writer to us: he revealed us to ourselves. Perhaps you will think my words exaggerated, written under the influence of grief. But you don't know him; you only knew a few of his works, and even if you knew them all, you would find it difficult to understand what he meant to us. One has to be a Russian to feel it. The most penetrating intellects among foreigners, a Mérimée, for example, saw in Gogol only a humorist in the English manner. His historical

The Russian Sphinx

significance was completely lost on them. I repeat, one has to be a Russian to realise what we have lost. . . .’

To Ivan Aksakov, Konstantin’s brother, he wrote a few days later: ‘I can say without exaggeration that I cannot remember anything that produced such an impression on me as the death of Gogol. This terrible death is an historic event, the significance of which cannot be understood at once: it is a mystery, a poignant, terrible mystery, we must try to solve it, but he who does solve it, will not find anything comforting in it. . . . The tragic fate of Russia is reflected in those Russians who stand nearer to her heart than others—no man, however strong in spirit, can take upon himself the struggle of a whole people, and Gogol perished! I can’t help feeling that he died because he made up his mind to die, and that this suicide began with the destruction of *Dead Souls*. As for the impression produced by his death, it will be enough for you to know that the provost of Petersburg University, Count Musin-Pushkin, was not ashamed to call Gogol a flunkey of a writer. . . . Count Musin-Pushkin was astonished at the insolence of the people who were sorry for Gogol; but no honest man need waste any honest indignation on that. Up to their neck in filth, these people are quite content to feed on this filth—much good may it do them. Honourable men ought to keep together even more closely now—let Gogol’s death at least have this one good result.’

Turgenev had been to see the provost of Petersburg University, who was also the chairman of the censorship committee, in connection with a short obituary article on Gogol he had written for the *Petersburg News* and which the censorship had banned. The Russian authorities were afraid of any public show of sympathy for the author of *The Government Inspector* and *Dead Souls*, and no article on Gogol was allowed to appear in the Petersburg press. Turgenev sent his article to Moscow, where it appeared in the *Moscow News* on 13 March (O.S.). There was nothing in this article to offend even the most conservative Russian, except one sentence. ‘Yes,’ Turgenev wrote, ‘he is dead, this man whom we have the right, the sorrowful right granted to us by his death, to call great.’ This sentence alone was enough to cause Turgenev’s arrest and exile to his estate. Turgenev tells the following anecdote in connection with the sentence in his article: ‘One lady of high

The Russian Sphinx

standing in Petersburg expressed the view that the punishment I had incurred as a result of my article was undeserved and, at any rate, too severe and cruel. In short, she defended me warmly. "But you don't seem to know", someone said to her, "that in his article he called Gogol a great man." "Impossible!" "I assure you it is so." "Oh," said the lady, "in that case I shan't say anything more: *je regrette, mais je comprends qu'on aît du sévir*" (I'm sorry, but I see that he had to be dealt with severely).' To call anyone, and least of all a writer, great in the reign of Nicholas I was a criminal offence.

5

Three days after the publication of Turgenev's article, its 'ardent and enterprising author', as General Dubelt, the head of the political police, put it, was arrested at the command of the Czar 'for manifest disobedience'. He was kept under arrest for a month, after which he was ordered to live on his estate under police supervision. Turgenev had already aroused the suspicions of the authorities by the stories of his *Diary of a Sportsman*, and he made them still more suspicious after the death of Gogol by flaunting a mourning armband and declaring in public that he was ready to be incarcerated in a fortress for Gogol. After his arrest, General Dubelt met Panayev at a party. 'One of the contributors of your journal', he said to him with a smile, 'wanted to be incarcerated in a fortress, but I'm afraid we couldn't grant him that pleasure.'

The first twenty-four hours of his arrest Turgenev spent in a police cell where, he records, he talked to an exquisitely polite and educated police sergeant who spoke to him of his walks in the Summer Gardens and of the 'aroma of birds'. It seems that the daughter of the police superintendent had found out who the prisoner at the police station was and asked her father to transfer him to their flat. In the police superintendent's flat, Turgenev was confined to a little room where he was surprised to find the police archives were kept, and he used to while away his time by looking through the confidential dossiers of the people who were under police supervision. Twenty-seven years later, on 24 January 1879, Turgenev described in a letter to Flaubert how he had kept himself

The Russian Sphinx

fit during his imprisonment. 'My room', he wrote, 'was small and the heat was stifling. Twice a day I carried 104 cards (two packs) one by one from one corner of the room to the other and back again. That made 208 trips or 416 in one day, each trip consisted of eight steps, making a total of 3,300—nearly two kilometres!'

In a confidential letter written on 13 May to Pauline Viardot and her husband, Turgenev declared that his article on Gogol had been merely a pretext for his arrest. 'The authorities', he wrote, 'have been looking askance at me for a long time and they took advantage of the first opportunity that presented itself. . . . They wanted to suppress everything people said about Gogol, and, incidentally, were glad of the opportunity to put a stop to my literary activities as well.' He added that he was well treated. 'I have a good room, I have books, and I am allowed to write; at first I was allowed to see my friends, but afterwards it was stopped because too many people came to see me. . . . I must say I am very bored in this hole. I am taking advantage of my enforced leisure to study Polish; I began studying it six weeks ago. I shall not be out of here for another fourteen days, and you can imagine how I am counting them. . . . My health is good, but I have grown quite ridiculously old: I could send you a strand of *grey* hair—I am not exaggerating a bit. However, I'm not losing courage. In the country I shall go shooting! Then I shall try to bring my affairs in order, and after that I shall carry on with my sketches from the life of the Russian people, the strangest and most wonderful people in the world. I shall start working on my novel, unhampered by the thought of having to pass it through the claws of the censorship, for I expect my arrest has made the publication of my work in Moscow impossible. It's a pity, but what is there to be done about it?' After warning his friends to keep his news a dead secret as the slightest hint in the press abroad might ruin him completely, he ended his letter on a sombre note, which sounds like a last farewell to Pauline Viardot: 'My life is finished, its charm has gone. I've eaten all my white bread; let's chew what is left of my black bread. . . .'

Taking advantage of the absence of Nicholas I from the capital, Turgenev, on 27 April (O.S.), wrote a letter to the heir to the throne, the future Alexander II, in which he denied that he had ever contemplated showing any disobedience to the authorities and

The Russian Sphinx

claimed that he had sent his article on Gogol to Moscow because he knew that it would have to pass through the censorship there. He begged Alexander to intercede with the Emperor on his behalf and asked for permission to travel without hindrance inside Russia. But he had hoped in vain. His letter to Alexander remained unanswered.

On the whole, however, he was not sorry to have spent a month under arrest. 'It gave me an opportunity', he wrote to the Aksakovs, 'to study an aspect of the Russian character that has hitherto been unknown to me.'

But the thought that the authorities were determined to suppress his literary activities did not make him lie low until the storm had blown over. On the contrary, he still remembered his 'Hannibal's oath' to do everything in his power to destroy serfdom and he wrote a story that would show up its rottenness in a manner that could not possibly be mistaken. The impression left on his mind by his mother's diary made it easy for him to choose the subject of his story. While still under arrest in Petersburg he wrote *Mumu*, an account of what had actually taken place at his mother's house in Moscow. Gerasim, the hero of the story, was his mother's deaf and dumb caretaker Andrey, who did not, however, run away to his native village after drowning his dog but stayed on in Moscow.

Mumu was published in the *Contemporary Review* two years later, the censor, who had passed it, being severely reprimanded by the authorities for failing to realise how the story showed up 'the improper use of a landowner's powers over his serfs. . . . The reader of this story', the censor was further told, 'cannot help being filled with compassion for the peasants oppressed by the wilful exercise of their powers by the landowners in spite of the fact that the landowners carry out their duties in a zealous and exemplary fashion.' What the authorities overlooked or dared not even hint at was the symbolic ending of the story in which Gerasim appears as the personification of the Russian serfs striding along irresistibly and fearlessly towards freedom.

6

Turgenev was released on 16 May (O.S.) and spent two days in Petersburg, visiting his friends and reading *Mumu* at the house of

The Russian Sphinx

Alexander Turgenev, a distant relative of his, whose young daughter Olga he nearly married two years later.

He left for Spasskoye on 18 May accompanied by a police officer. In Spasskoye the district police officer used to pay a visit to him at regular intervals, Turgenev refusing to see him and sending out a ten-rouble note for him. More annoying was the plain-clothes man, the 'Mtsensk Cerberus', as Turgenev called him, who used to follow him about on his shooting expeditions and then send in reports to the authorities. 'Today', one of these reports read, 'he went shooting. He looked in good health. He stopped in a field and spoke a long time with the peasants about freedom. I went up to him, took off my hat and bowed, but Ivan Sergeyevich looked as if he had seen the devil, and became serious.' One day Turgenev grew so exasperated at the unwanted attentions of the police sleuth that he hit him with his riding whip.

It was during his first summer as an exile in Spasskoye that Turgenev made the acquaintance of Afanasy Fet, the lyric poet. Fet was a dyed-in-the-wool conservative. 'An inveterate and fierce defender of serfdom and an army officer of the old school,' Turgenev characterised him many years later. Chekhov left an interesting note in his diary about Fet. 'My neighbour Semenkovich', he wrote in 1896, 'told me that his uncle Fet, the well-known lyric poet, used to put down the window of his carriage when driving past Moscow University and spit at it.'

Fet was amazed to find that Turgenev, though only two years older than he, was so grey that it was impossible to make out the original colour of his hair. At the country house where he met him, Fet records, 'The ladies surrounded Turgenev and clung to him like bees to honey.' Fet was translating the Odes of Horace at the time and, at Turgenev's suggestion, he read his translation of the first two odes while Turgenev compared it with the Latin original.

During Fet's visit to Spasskoye, Turgenev introduced him to his manager Nicholas Tyutchev and Tyutchev's wife and sister. After dinner they all went to have coffee in the drawing-room where Turgenev stretched himself full-length on the '*dangereux* sofa—*dès qu'on y est, on y dort*' as he described it in one of his letters to Flaubert; an enormous Empire sofa, 'the only piece of furniture in Spasskoye', Fet writes, 'with a spring mattress', immortalised in *On*

The Russian Sphinx

the Eve. From time to time Turgenev would contribute a few remarks to the general conversation in his thin, lisping voice; it was only when Fet began to extol the spiritual qualities of Russian women that Turgenev got sufficiently interested to sit up. 'You've just said something', he exclaimed, 'that makes it impossible for me to lie down quietly.'

Turgenev spent the sixteen months of his exile writing, reading, shooting and playing chess. Pauline Viardot's letters brought him 'the noise and bustle of a happy and active life with all the warmth of the sun and of poetry. I feel', he wrote to her, 'my life running out drop by drop like the water from a tap that has not been turned off properly. . . .' Not a word about Feoktista!

At Christmas something of the old jollity was revived. 'I had a masked ball,' Turgenev wrote to Sergey Aksakov, 'and my servants amused themselves. The workmen from my brother's paper mill arrived and performed a brigand drama. You cannot imagine anything more funny. The part of the brigand chief was performed by one of the workmen and that of the representative of law and order by a young peasant; the play had a chorus similar to the chorus in the Greek plays, and murders galore and anything you like.'

What Turgenev really missed was music. He thought of paying a call on a neighbour who had his own serf orchestra, conducted by a German, but the thought that all the members of the orchestra had been bought *en masse* was something he could not stomach. Eventually he persuaded his manager's wife and her sister to play for him. They played Beethoven's *Coriolanus* overture. 'What a masterpiece!' he wrote to Pauline Viardot. 'I don't know any other overture which can compare with it.' Later the musical evenings became more frequent. 'We are up to our necks in Mozart,' he wrote to Pauline Viardot, in May 1853. 'I say *we* because I usually take up a position behind the chairs of the two ladies, turn the pages and act as the conductor. In moments of excitement I cannot refrain from emitting horrible noises under the pretext of singing which causes my two assistants to shiver nervously.'

In January 1853 Pauline Viardot was in Petersburg again. Turgenev received no letters from her and had to rely on his friends to supply him with the news of her operatic triumphs. In Petersburg,

The Russian Sphinx

Panayev wrote to him, she created a sensation and all the seats were sold out. Princess Meshchersky informed him where Pauline Viardot was going to stay in Moscow. Turgenev decided to take a chance and, having procured a passport under a false name, arrived in Moscow at the end of March to the dismay of his friends, returning to Spasskoye after a few days. Nothing is known of what passed between them, but it is perhaps significant that he seems to have written only one letter to her after their meeting and no letters at all during the next two years.

At the end of 1852 Turgenev received his first letter from his daughter Paulinette. His brief reply contains a rather lame apology for not having written to her before plus an injunction to behave well, work and, above all, love her two mothers (Pauline Viardot and her mother Mme. Garcia). '*Ne doute jamais de mon affection*', he concluded.

On 16 April 1853, the anniversary of his arrest, Turgenev wrote another letter to the Crown Prince Alexander, this time acknowledging his guilt, and asking for permission to go to Petersburg or Moscow to consult his doctors. But the chief of the political police, Count Orlov, refused to forward the letter. Turgenev then enlisted the services of the playwright, Count Alexey Tolstoy, who was Court Chamberlain at the time, who succeeded in obtaining a pardon for him. On 14 November 1853 (O.S.) Count Orlov reported to Nicholas I that Turgenev acknowledged his guilt and expressed the view that he had been sufficiently punished. Nicholas I agreed to forgive him, but ordered him to be kept under the strictest supervision, and Turgenev continued to be under police supervision till the death of Nicholas I and the amnesty granted by Alexander II on 26 August 1856.

7

The Diary of a Sportsman was published in Moscow in August 1852, by Nicholas Ketcher, a translator of Shakespeare and a former member of Stankevich's circle. He had fallen on evil days, and Turgenev had made him a present of the first published collection of his short stories. The book was an instantaneous success. The attitude to it of the most influential section of the Russian

The Russian Sphinx

ruling class was summed up by Countess Rostopchin, who remarked to a friend: '*C'est un livre incendiaire.*' Annenkov tells of an educated and humane Russian statesman who to the end of his life believed that Turgenev owed the success of his book 'to the French way of arousing one "estate" against another'. The Minister of Education reported to Nicholas I that 'a great part of the stories in the book is a direct incitement to the destruction of the Russian landowner'. Nicholas I dismissed the Moscow censor who had passed it for publication.

But great as the success of *The Diary of a Sportsman* had been, Turgenev felt that he could no longer go on writing the same kind of stories. 'I must take a new road,' he wrote to Annenkov on 28 October 1852 (O.S.), his thirty-fourth birthday. 'I've had enough of extracting quintessence from human characters and pouring them into little bottles—"Have a sniff at it, dear reader, uncork it and have a good sniff at it—smells of a Russian type, doesn't it?"' He had been planning to write a novel, but he was still uncertain whether, as he put it, he was capable of writing anything on a grand scale. At the beginning of 1852 he published two long reviews in the *Contemporary*, in which he touched on some of the problems of creative writing. In the first—a criticism of *The Niece*, a novel by Countess Salias—he formulated for the first time his theory of a novel as 'a reflection of the elements of social life'. There were no 'objective talents', he declared. The greatest genius was always in touch with life in general—the everlasting source of every art—and his own personality in particular. In the second (a criticism of Alexander Ostrovsky's comedy *A Poor Bride*) he argued that before a writer began working on his novel or play, he must be in complete command of his characters so as to avoid overloading his work with unnecessary detail and to concentrate only on what is characteristic and typical about them. 'I will be told', Turgenev wrote, 'that this is psychology; perhaps, but the psychologist must disappear in the artist.' Hard work, observation and intelligence were not enough. 'They merely draw, as it were, straight lines,' Turgenev wrote. 'It is only poetry [in the widest sense of the word] that is endowed with the "wave-like" beauty Hogarth speaks of.' To Turgenev a writer can be said to have reached 'poetic truth' only if the character he extracts from the very heart of reality

The Russian Sphinx

emerges from his hands as a type. To be able to do that, the writer, Turgenev declared in a letter to Konstantin Aksakov, must possess 'simplicity, composure, clarity of lines, and the conscientiousness that comes from confidence.' He must, above all, avoid being 'literary'. 'A vast amount of reading', Turgenev wrote in his review of *The Niece*, 'is not always a virtue in a writer.' He himself felt that he could achieve something only when he had destroyed 'the man of letters' in himself. Finally, a writer, whether endowed with creative talent or not, ought to possess a power of concentration, a sense of direction and a strong and abiding faith. Without such a faith, Turgenev told a correspondent, life was not worth living, and without ardent love and faith irony was trash and criticism worse than abuse. 'If we analyse the poetry of evil, personified in the character of Satan,' he wrote, 'we shall find even there infinite love at its foundation.'

This brief sketch of Turgenev's ideas on the art of writing would be incomplete without a reference to his attitude towards the reading public. In June 1853 Turgenev received a letter from a young writer who asked whether it was possible to write inferior stuff for money and later on 'show oneself in one's true colours'. Turgenev's reply was uncompromising. 'You ought to know', he wrote, 'that it is impossible to cheat the public—it is more intelligent than any of us; you ought to know, too, that by giving yourself entirely to it, you must still be grateful if it understands and appreciates your sacrifice, if, indeed, it pays any attention to you at all; and this is quite understandable—I'll say more: it is absolutely fair. The public does not want you; it is you who want the public. If you want to conquer it, you must apply all your strength to that task. I don't mean that you should humour it; no, be what God has made you, give everything you have, and if your talent is original, if your personality is interesting, the public will recognise you and make use of you as, for instance, in another field of human endeavour it made use of guttapercha because it found it useful and handy.'

Turgenev's first attempt to write 'in a new manner' was not entirely successful. He wrote his long short-story, *The Inn*, the chief merit of which lay, in his view, in its greater simplicity. He was not trying to be clever, he told Konstantin Aksakov, but was

The Russian Sphinx

merely trying to express 'in a business-like manner' what he considered important. 'It is quite enough for a writer to understand and express life,' he wrote. 'It is not his business to be clever about it or to attempt to improve it.' Perhaps this sentence explains the failure of the story: in trying to get away from his 'old manner', Turgenev weakened the criticism of life which was so prominent a feature of his stories in *The Diary of a Sportsman*. *The Inn* is certainly simpler (it has hardly any descriptive passages at all), but it is also paler and lacks the punch of his earlier stories.

His attempt to write his first novel—*Two Generations*—was an even bigger failure. He began it in 1852 and by the end of February 1853 he had written twelve chapters which he sent to his friends—Botkin, Annenkov, Ketcher and the Aksakovs—for their criticisms. Their replies were so unfavourable that he decided to abandon his work on the novel. He tried to re-write it in 1855, but gave it up as a bad job and destroyed it except for the short fragment *Her Ladyship's Private Office* published in 1859.

The only other thing Turgenev wrote during the sixteen months of his exile was a review of Sergey Aksakov's book *The Diary of a Sportsman of the Orenburg Province* in which he included a detailed description of gun-dogs and their training. The reason for his meagre output was not only his preoccupation with his first novel, but also his passion for shooting. The winter came unusually early in 1853. At the beginning of October a snow storm was raging. 'I have opened a window of the verandah for a moment,' he wrote to Pauline Viardot. '—brrh! What a blast of icy wind and snow. Diana [the flesh-coloured English pointer he had brought with him from France and to which he was deeply attached] got up but recoiled in horror. Oh, my poor little one, you're not used to such a climate! Poor little French dog, come on, let's sit down side by side and think of Courtavenel!' But he had made excellent use of the brief autumn all the same. In a letter to Sergey Aksakov he gave the following account of his 'bag':—69 woodcock, 66 snipe, 39 double-snipe, 33 capercalys, 31 partridges, 16 hares—a total of 304. Aksakov replied that it was not bad at all, but that his own 'bag' that autumn was 1,200 birds.

By the beginning of 1854 Turgenev was back in Petersburg, where a dinner in his honour was given by the *Contemporary Review*. 'My life', Turgenev wrote to Sergey Aksakov, 'though not dissipated, is frittered away on thousands of trifles.' He lived in a sumptuously furnished flat, and the servant problem was satisfactorily solved for him by the appearance of Zakhar, a perfect gentleman's gentleman with a taste for literature (he wrote short stories and was quite often consulted by Turgenev on literary matters), and Stepan, a most accomplished cook, who came to his flat one day and asked to be bought from his master whom he threatened to 'do in'. Turgenev bought him for 800 roubles and offered to set him free. But Stepan refused the offer and remained with Turgenev for many years, eventually marrying Anne, the little girl Turgenev had so admired on his return from France, and whom he described in *Assya*. Turgenev was now able to give excellent dinners, which were usually very gay and noisy affairs, not, as Fet remarks, without an admixture of Attic salt. The kindly and obliging host composed epigrams on his friends of what was to become known as the '*Contemporary circle*': Nekrasov, Panayev, Goncharov, Grigorovich, Annenkov, Druzhinin, Polonsky and Botkin. When Goncharov and Annenkov rushed to the glazed pot of caviare, Turgenev shouted at them: 'Gentlemen, don't forget you're not the only ones here!'

But it was not in the congenial company of his literary friends that Turgenev spent most of his time during the spring and summer of 1854. He was more often to be seen at the house of Alexander Turgenev, with whose eighteen-year-old daughter Olga, an attractive and intelligent girl, he had fallen in love. It was a strange affair: a thirty-five-year-old, already white-haired, literary celebrity, who had just parted from his mistress and who had a desperate passion for one of the most brilliant singers of the age, and an innocent young girl, a 'pure and beautiful creature', as Turgenev called her after her death in 1872:—what could they have in common? Having tried physical love as a remedy for his all-absorbing passion for the Courtavenel Circe, was he now trying what spiritual love could do? Turgenev seems to have been toying with the idea of marrying Olga. Rumours of his impending engagement

The Russian Sphinx

had reached his friends at the beginning of April, but Turgenev was quick to deny them. 'I must explain that the affair you mentioned (my marriage) is without foundation,' he wrote to one of them. 'I daresay I too shall one day end up like the rest, that is, by marriage, but the time for it has not come yet.' Some weeks later he spent a few days at the Aksakov estate near Moscow and apparently discussed his impending marriage to Olga with Sergey Aksakov. The old man even tried to tell his fortune by cards. But the cards were most disappointing: they did not foretell a marriage. Turgenev spent the rest of the spring and summer with Olga. On 11 June Aksakov wrote to him: 'My dear Ivan Sergeyevich, I have at last received the long-expected letter from you, but, alas, it was most unsatisfactory, that is, it told me nothing of what I most desired to know. I presume therefore that there was nothing to write about, for I don't expect you have forgotten your promise.' Turgenev did not reply till 7 August: 'I did not write to you about my plans because nothing came of them—the cards were right.' Aksakov replied: 'So the cards told the truth—I did not believe them and expected quite a different result. May it all turn out for the best—I sincerely hope so!'

It did not turn out for the best for Olga: she fell seriously ill and did not recover for a long time. Tatyana Shestov in *Smoke* is generally supposed to be a portrait of Olga Turgenev—the happy ending of the novel may have been Turgenev's way of righting an old wrong, but then the hero of the novel, though a victim of a great passion, too, has nothing about him even remotely resembling Turgenev.

It is, surely, not without significance that Turgenev should have written his story *A Backwater* just at this time. Pushkin's poem *The Upas Tree*, which plays so tragic a part in the story, 'begotten', as Pushkin describes it, 'on the day of wrath', whose branches exude a deadly poison—what an apt symbol for Turgenev's dark passion for Pauline Viardot, a passion he was powerless to resist and which even Olga's pure love could not cure.

In January 1855 Turgenev again visited the Aksakovs at their estate and spent most of his time in heated arguments with Konstantin and Alexey Khomyakov, another leading Slavophil theoretician. Konstantin Aksakov, a confirmed bachelor, talked a great deal about marriage as a 'sacrament', and his mother invited

The Russian Sphinx

Turgenev to go to church. Turgenev agreed to go to church, but staunchly refused to recognise marriage as a 'sacrament'. He shocked the whole patriarchal family by declaring that Belinsky's open letter to Gogol was his 'whole religion'.

What the Aksakovs and the rest of the Slavophiles thought of Turgenev is summed up by Konstantin's sister Vera, a very religious girl, given to mysticism. 'Apart from having no idea of religion and apart from having led an immoral life which has corrupted his ideas,' she wrote in her diary, 'this man is capable of experiencing only physical feelings; he is quite incapable of appreciating the spiritual aspect of things. . . . His thoughts are the fruits of his purely earthly sensations. . . . He is a man who does not possess even a pagan's strength of mind and loftiness of spirit. . . . In spite of his enormous figure, he is bodily and spiritually flabby.'

What Vera Aksakov would have said if she had been present in May of that year at Spasskoye, where Turgenev was entertaining Botkin, Druzhinin and Grigorovich to gargantuan feasts and all sorts of 'pagan' amusements, can be easily imagined. The four writers even composed a play for the occasion, in which they all acted. The play—a farce entitled *The School of Hospitality*—was performed on 26 May. Its chief character, played by Turgenev, was a goodnatured landowner who had never lived in the country and who was left an estate by a relative. He gets so excited that he invites all his friends to visit him in the country, describing to them the delights of country life and the marvellous amenities of his country house. Actually, the estate is in ruins and the country house in such a hopeless state of disrepair that by the time his visitors begin to arrive, the landowner's wife and children have left him and he himself rushes into the kitchen and implores the cook to tell his guests that he and his family are dead. Turgenev even agreed to include in his dialogue the famous phrase he was supposed to have used on the deck of the burning ship during his first voyage to Germany: 'Save me, save me, I'm the only son of my mother,' which was ecstatically applauded by the large audience. The farce was followed by a parody, written by Turgenev, of *Œdipus and Antigone*, Ozerov's pseudo-classical play, Grigorovich taking the part of Antigone and Turgenev playing Œdipus.

9

Having seen off his friends, Turgenev sat down to write *Rudin*, which he first entitled *A Highly Gifted Nature*. 'Now everything is very quiet here,' he wrote to Botkin on 17 June (O.S.). 'At first we had such a heatwave and drought that we nearly went off our heads. We sat in the dark and could scarcely breathe. Fortunately, the rains came, and I have settled down to work.' He wrote the first version of *Rudin* in seven weeks. The manuscript of the novel bears this note in Turgenev's hand: '*Rudin*. Began on Sunday, 5 June 1855, at Spasskoye; finished on Sunday, 24 July 1855, at the same place—in seven weeks. Published with large additions in the Jan. and Feb. issues of the *Contemporary Review* of 1856.' The rapidity with which Turgenev had finished the novel was due in the main to the new method he had adopted for writing his works. This consisted in the drawing up of a list of characters, giving their ages and social positions and—in the margin—the initials of the actual persons he used as their prototypes. This was followed by a careful analysis of the characters, including their life histories and their relationships to the other characters in the novel or story. By the time Turgenev had finished this preliminary work, there was very little he did not know about the plot or the characters of his future work, the writing of which presented no particular problems—at least not at first. The difficulties usually cropped up after Turgenev had sent out copies of his manuscript to his friends and when he tried to re-write his novel in the light of their criticism. 'I have never worked so much on any of my works as on this one,' he wrote to Sergey Aksakov on 3 August (O.S.). 'That is no guarantee, of course, but at least I have nothing to reproach myself with. If the Pushkins and the Gogols worked so much on their things and altered them a dozen times, small fry like us are bound to do so. Otherwise you get a good idea in your head, but you are too lazy to think it out properly—and you get some confused nonsense. That has happened to me quite a few times, and I've vowed never to let it happen again.'

The objections of his friends mainly concerned the character of Rudin, which they found was too closely modelled on Bakunin,

The Russian Sphinx

who was at that time kept in solitary confinement in the Schliesselburg fortress in Petersburg. Turgenev began his revision of the novel in October after discussing it with his closest friends, of whom Botkin was apparently responsible for most of the adopted suggestions, such as the enlargement of Rudin's 'improvisation' in the third chapter, the inclusion of Lezhnev's story about Pokrovsky's 'circle', and the whole of the epilogue, except the final scene. Turgenev himself never denied that Rudin's prototpye was Bakunin. 'What kind of a man is Bakunin?' he wrote to the Ukrainian writer Maria Markevich on 28 September 1862. 'I've drawn a rather good portrait of him in Rudin.' Herzen, on the other hand, was contemptuous of Turgenev's claim to have depicted Bakunin as Rudin. 'I am told,' Herzen wrote, 'that Turgenev wanted to draw Bakunin's portrait in *Rudin*. But Rudin scarcely recalls certain of Bakunin's features. Turgenev, carried away by God's biblical habit, created Rudin in his own image. Rudin is really Turgenev himself who listened too well to the philosophic jargon of the young Bakunin.'

There is a great deal of truth in Herzen's criticism: Turgenev had not had an opportunity of studying Bakunin after he had parted from him in Berlin fifteen years earlier. On the other hand, Turgenev's claim cannot be dismissed out of hand, either. What he gave in *Rudin* was an artistic re-creation of Bakunin, the essential features of whose character—what Belinsky had called 'the Brahma' in him—he had caught with the eye of genius; but Rudin as he appears in the novel is not Bakunin he was in life. Indeed, certain sides of Rudin's character have an unmistakable autobiographical quality. Rudin's behaviour in the scene with Natalya in Chapter IX, for instance, is how Turgenev himself would have behaved in a similar situation. 'Submission to fate',—Rudin's advice to Natalya—was certainly not Bakunin's way of solving problems; it was Turgenev's way of meeting a crisis, as he admitted in the autobiographical soliloquy in *A Month in the Country* and as he was soon to proclaim in his story *Faust*. Indeed, Turgenev himself was aware of that. 'What pleases me, too,' he wrote to Sergey Aksakov on 27 February 1856 (O.S.), 'is that you do not look for a copy of some well-known person in *Rudin*. If one has to copy anyone, one might as well begin by copying oneself.'

The year 1855 was remarkable for still another reason: it was during that year that Turgenev met two outstanding men who were destined to exercise a tremendous influence on the social and literary life of Russia, two men with whom for quite different reasons he was involved in an almost life-long struggle. They were Nicholas Chernyshevsky and Count Leo Tolstoy.

Chernyshevsky, like Tolstoy, was ten years younger than Turgenev. He was the son of a priest and was educated in a divinity school. In 1846 he entered Petersburg University, then taught Russian for two years in a secondary school in Saratov, and finally joined the staff of *The Contemporary Review* in 1855. It was in that year that his famous M.A. dissertation on *The Aesthetic Relationship of Art to Reality* was published in the *Contemporary Review*.

Turgenev's first reaction to Chernyshevsky's treatise was to condemn it, in a letter to Panayev on 10 June (O.S.), as 'a lifeless abomination' and 'the product of vicious stupidity and blindness'. Writing to Grigorovich a month later he vowed 'henceforth to persecute, despise and destroy him [i.e. Chernyshevsky] with all permissible and, particularly, impermissible means. I have just read his disgusting book,' he wrote, '... which the *Contemporary* was not ashamed to review seriously [the review was written by Chernyshevsky himself!]. . . . Raca! Raca! Raca! You know that there is nothing more terrible in the world than this Jewish curse.' As always, Turgenev was at first carried away by his own impetuosity. Botkin, the aesthete, took a much more sober view of Chernyshevsky's longwinded, voluminous and pedestrian dissertation. 'There is a great deal that is intelligent and sensible in it,' he wrote to Turgenev. 'The only thing that is absurd is his definition of art as "a substitute for reality". It is, however, incontestable that the old conceptions of art are no longer tenable as a result of our changed ideas of nature and reality. . . . Chernyshevsky's great merit is that he has touched on a question that has hitherto been left severely alone.' Turgenev's reply was couched in less maledictory terms. 'As for Chernyshevsky's book,' he wrote to Botkin and Nekraskov on 25 July (O.S.) 'this is my main accusation against it:

The Russian Sphinx

in his opinion Art is, as he himself puts it, only a substitute for Reality and Life, and in effect is good only for immature people. Say what you will, this idea lies at the very foundation of his argument. And, in my view, this is nonsense. Shakespeare's Hamlet does not exist in reality—or rather it does exist—yes, Shakespeare discovered him and made him into the common property of us all. Chernyshevsky presumes a great deal—he imagines that he can attain to this heart of life, which you mention, himself. No, his book is both false and harmful.' Later still, Turgenev again modified his view of Chernyshevsky, when in a letter to Druzhinin on November 1856 he wrote: 'I am vexed with him for his dryness and rigid taste, but I do not find any "lifelessness" in him; on the contrary, I feel a living current in him, though perhaps not the one you [Druzhinin was an upholder of the theory of "art for art's sake"] would like to find in criticism. He does not understand poetry, but a critic neither makes nor unmakes poets; but—how shall I put it?—he does understand the needs of contemporary life, and in him this is not a manifestation of a disordered liver, as our most excellent Grigorovich used to say, but the very root of his existence. However, enough of this. I regard Chernyshevsky as useful; time will show whether I am right or wrong.'

A few weeks later, Chernyshevsky himself took up the cudgels on behalf of Turgenev who had been attacked by Krayevsky, who had quite mistakenly thought that Turgenev had given to the *Contemporary Review* a story which he had promised to him. 'Let them abuse whom they like,' Chernyshevsky wrote to Nekrasov, 'but how dare they insult Turgenev, who is better than any of us, and whatever his weakness (if too much kindness can be called a weakness), is the most honest and honourable man among all our writers.'

This honeymoon mood was not to last long, but at least it did exist for a time, whereas the clashes between Turgenev and Tolstoy began almost as soon as they met.

Turgenev first met Countess Maria Tolstoy, Tolstoy's married sister. 'I have become acquainted with Tolstoy's family,' he wrote to Annenkov on 1 November 1854, 'and have learnt many particulars about Tolstoy. I was shown his portrait. His sister (also married to a Count Tolstoy) is one of the most attractive women I



The *Contemporary* Circle: March 1856. *Sitting (from left to right):* Goncharov, Turgenev, Druzhinin, Ostrovsky. *Standing:* Tolstoy, Grigorovich



Turgenev and his literary associates. *Top row (from left to right):* Turgenev, Count Sollogub, Tolstoy. *Bottom row:* Nekrasov, Grigorovich, Panayev



Ivan Turgenev, aged 40 (Water colour by A. Nikitin)

The Russian Sphinx

have ever met—charming, intelligent and simple. In my old age (three days ago I was 36) I have nearly fallen in love. I can see from here how your eyes grow large and your lips open and emit the sound “gkha—gkha—gkha”, which passes for a laugh with you, but I can’t conceal the fact that I’m smitten to the heart. I have not met so much grace for a long time. . . . You’ll no doubt think—what an amorous old devil! Nature has given me a sensitive heart, old fellow! It is strange, though, that I should always choose you for my confidant.’

Countess Maria Tolstoy, unhappily married and soon to be separated from her husband (she retired to a convent eventually), with her ‘large, moist eyes, full of deep feeling’, as Botkin described her, was bound to have made more than an ordinary impression on Turgenev, particularly as she was the sister of a young writer who, as he wrote to her in December 1854, had only to write as good a thing as his *Youth* to occupy the first place among the best contemporary Russian writers.

In between recommending Robert Burns to Nekrasov as ‘the pure spring of poetry’ and rejoicing at the coming publication of Druzhinin’s articles on George Crabbe, Turgenev cried ‘Hurrah’ and raised his glass of champagne to Tolstoy for his description of the Crimean campaign, in *Sebastopol*. On 9 October 1855 (O.S.) he wrote his first letter to Tolstoy, whom he thanked for dedicating the story *Tree-felling* to him and whom he advised to get out of the Crimea as soon as possible as he had been there long enough to show that he was no coward. ‘A military career is not for you,’ Turgenev wrote. ‘Your vocation is to be a writer, an artist in words and ideas . . . your weapon is the pen and not the sword, and the Muses are jealous: they do not tolerate vanity!’

Unfortunately, the twenty-six-year-old Tolstoy not only revelled in worldly vanities, but also showed such a contempt for Turgenev’s democratic ideas that a clash between them was inevitable. Fet, who became a close friend of Tolstoy’s, put the whole thing in a nutshell when he wrote in his memoirs: ‘The fresh and unspoilt instinct of Tolstoy could not help resenting the enthusiasm shown by aristocratic writers against the vital interests of the aristocracy.’ In other words, what Tolstoy as well as Fet resented was Turgenev’s demands for liberal reforms, which began to be voiced

quite openly with the ascension of Alexander II on the throne. Holding such conservative views, Tolstoy naturally assumed that Turgenev's opinions were mere 'phrases'. He therefore accused Turgenev of playing for effect and even found a confirmation of his view in Turgenev's physical idiosyncrasies, declaring, according to Annenkov, that Turgenev had 'phrase-mongering haunches'. Grigorovich's often quoted story of Tolstoy who, after a violent argument with Turgenev, exclaimed 'with dilating nostrils': 'I shan't permit him to do anything to spite me. Look, how he keeps marching past me, wagging his democratic haunches!'—is merely another version of the same thing. To Tolstoy 'phrase-mongering haunches' and 'democratic haunches' were indistinguishable from each other, for he did not expect a man like Turgenev, who was a much richer landowner than he, to hold views which were contrary to the interests of the landed gentry. The young Tolstoy himself sought to resolve the conflict between his private interests and his conscience by concentrating on his own personal salvation. Hence his arrogant rejection of all economic and philosophic theories as the inventions of men who wished either to delude themselves or to delude others. Hence, too, his conviction that Turgenev was a 'hypocrite' and his resentment of Turgenev's 'fatherly' attitude towards him. What, on the other hand, drove Turgenev into fits of blazing fury was Tolstoy's boorishness in deriding the ideals he had cherished since childhood and delightedly seeking out the weakest points of his character and, particularly, his unfortunate habit of making rash statements, in order to insult him in the company of his friends.

The first mistake Turgenev made, therefore, was to invite Tolstoy to stay at his flat when they met for the first time in Petersburg on 3 December 1855. A fortnight after Tolstoy's arrival in Petersburg Turgenev referred to him in a letter to Nekrasov as 'a highly sympathetic and original man'. A week later he told Annenkov that he had nicknamed Tolstoy 'the troglodyte' for his 'wild suspiciousness and buffalo-like stubbornness'. 'I have grown to love him', he confessed, 'with a strange and almost fatherly feeling.' A month later the situation became much more strained. 'I have nearly quarrelled with Tolstoy,' Turgenev wrote to Botkin. 'It is impossible for ignorance not to come out in one way or another. At

The Russian Sphinx

a dinner at Nekrasov's the day before yesterday Tolstoy spoke so rudely and vulgarly about George Sand that we had a violent quarrel—in short, he made everybody angry and showed himself in a very unfavourable light.'

The testimony of Fet and Grigorovich, malicious as some of it is, only goes to confirm the unhappy consequence of Turgenev's unwise decision to have Tolstoy to stay with him. Fet, like Tolstoy, was on active service at the time, being stationed with his cavalry regiment near the Baltic coast, and he used to spend his short leaves in Petersburg. 'I found Turgenev already installed in his new, and much more comfortable, flat in the same house,' Fet writes in his memoirs. 'He liked to get up and have his breakfast very early and during my brief stays in Petersburg I used to visit him every day at ten o'clock to have a good talk. When Zakhar opened the front door for me one day, I noticed a sword with an Anne ribbon, in a corner of the hall. "Whose sword is this?" I asked. "Won't you come in here, sir?" Zakhar whispered, showing me into a room on the left. "That is Count Tolstoy's sword, sir. The Count is asleep in the drawing room, and Ivan Sergeyevich is having breakfast in his study."'

Turgenev was not slow in acquainting Fet with the snags of having Tolstoy as a lodger. 'It's been like this all the time,' he said to Fet, with an uneasy laugh. 'He came back from his battery at Sebastopol, stopped at my flat and off he went painting the town red. Debaucheries, gipsies, cards; and then asleep like a log till two o'clock in the afternoon. I tried to stop him, but have given it up as a bad job.'

Even Fet could not help noticing the way Tolstoy's 'buffalo-like stubbornness' exasperated Turgenev. 'From the very first moment,' he writes in his memoirs, 'I noticed in the young Tolstoy an involuntary opposition to everything that was accepted as axiomatic in the realm of thought . . . and I was a witness of the state of utter despair to which Turgenev was driven by Tolstoy's retorts which were all the more scathing because they seemed so self-controlled.'

'I cannot agree', Fet reports Tolstoy as saying, 'that the opinions you express are your convictions. I stand with a dagger or a sword at a door, saying, "While I live no one shall enter here." That's a

The Russian Sphinx

conviction. But you are trying to conceal the substance of your thoughts from each other and you call that conviction!

'Then why come here?' Turgenev, who must have realised the truth in Tolstoy's hint at the growing cleavage between him, a typical liberal, and Chernyshevsky, one of the revolutionary leaders of that time, cried, gasping for breath, in a voice rising to a high falsetto. 'Your banner is not here. Go to Princess B—. . . .'

'Why should I ask you where I ought to go?' Tolstoy replied with exasperating arrogance. 'Besides, idle talk will not become conviction whether I come here or not.'

Six months after Turgenev's death Tolstoy wrote: 'I have always loved him, but it is only after his death that I have learnt to appreciate him as he deserves. The chief thing about him was his truthfulness. . . . He lived, sought and in his works expressed whatever he found—everything he found.' And yet thirty-three years earlier he accused the same Turgenev of 'idle talk' and refused to recognise his sincerity. He visited Turgenev at Spasskoye in May 1856, but stayed only two days. After Turgenev had left for France in August, Tolstoy made an attempt to bridge the gulf between them, and Turgenev responded warmly by replying at great length to his 'nice and strange' letter and trying to analyse their misunderstandings.

'I shall never cease loving you', he wrote to Tolstoy from Courtavenel on 25 September 1856, 'and esteeming your friendship, though, owing to my fault, I suppose, each of us will for a long time continue to feel a certain constraint in the other one's presence. . . . You are the only man with whom I have had any serious misunderstandings. I believe this happened simply because I did not want our relationship to be merely friendly; I wanted to go farther and deeper; but I'm afraid I acted rashly, I hurt your feelings, I vexed you and, noticing my mistake, I withdrew a little too precipitately perhaps. That is why this "gulf" has opened between us. . . . I cannot think of any other explanation, except that I am much older than you and that I had followed a different path; except for our so-called literary interests, we have—I am quite convinced of that—very few things in common; all your life is in the future—all my life is built upon the past. I cannot possibly follow you; you cannot follow me, either; you stand too

The Russian Sphinx

firmly on your own feet to be anyone's follower. I assure you that I never thought you had a vile temper and never suspected you of literary jealousy. I thought you rather—pardon the expression—preposterous, but I never thought badly of you; and you are too perspicacious not to realise that if either of us is to be jealous of the other, it is not you who have to be jealous of me. In short, I don't expect we shall ever become friends in the Rousseau meaning of the word; but . . . when you have calmed down and the ferment in you has subsided, we shall, I am sure, shake hands as freely and as cheerfully as on the day when I first saw you in Petersburg.'

Two months later, on receiving Tolstoy's reply to his letter, in which Tolstoy accused him of not being sincere with him, Turgenev wrote: 'It is quite true that I cannot be absolutely sincere with you because I cannot be absolutely frank with you; it seems to me that we have become acquainted at an awkward and inauspicious moment, and that when we meet again things will be much easier and smoother. I feel that I am fond of you as a man (as an author I have always admired you); but a lot in you makes me wince. Away from you (strange as it may seem), I am as fond of you as of a brother—and I even feel a tenderness towards you. In short, I am fond of you—that is certain; perhaps something good will come of it one day.'

A vain hope! Turgenev's two letters to Tolstoy, however, are interesting inasmuch as they show that the 'misunderstandings' that had arisen between them were largely personal. Interesting, too, is Turgenev's reference to Tolstoy's literary jealousy. At the time of their meeting Turgenev was one of the greatest stylists of Russian prose, while Tolstoy's style was so bad that Panayev had to return the manuscript of *Youth* to him to be re-written. 'Tolstoy', Panayev wrote to Turgenev on 6 December 1856 (O.S.) 'cannot write at all, his periods are two yards long, and he gets mixed up in expressing his ideas, which are clear enough, simply because of his inability to express himself.' Considering how touchy Tolstoy was, it would not be at all surprising if he envied Turgenev's ability to write such fine prose and if that were not one of the reasons for his feeling of resentment against him.

When writing *Rudin* Turgenev was not sure whether his literary career had not really come to an end. The novel, he decided, would give the answer to the question. If it failed, he would devote himself to criticism, for, he told Druzhinin, he hoped to die a man of letters and did not wish to be anything else. *Rudin*, according to Annenkov, proved a great triumph for its author. It was generally accepted as a true characterisation of one of the most progressive types of the time—a man whose great intellectual powers were wasted in the barren reign of Nicholas I. While waiting to see whether his novel would succeed or not, Turgenev again felt the need for the close companionship of a woman. As in the case of Feoktista and Olga Turgenev, the purely physical and the spiritual companionship, which he could find combined only in Pauline Viardot, became divided, and of the two women who had occupied most of his time in Petersburg in the winter of 1855–56, one was a *lorette* and the other a deeply religious woman who became his close friend for over eleven years. ‘The man you would never have recognised’, Turgenev wrote to Botkin on 3 December 1855, ‘would be me, your obedient servant. Try to imagine me driving about to *lorette* balls in the suburbs of Petersburg, in love with a very pretty Polish woman, making her presents of silver dinner services and spending nights with her till 8 o’clock in the morning! It is quite unexpected and quite unlike me, isn’t it? And yet it is true. But now I am surfeited and I want to get back to my groove—to become a philosopher and to work—it is ridiculous to play the fool at my age!’

He was very fond of his mistress all the same. ‘Come to Petersburg’, he urged Botkin, ‘and I’ll introduce you to Nadezhda Nikolayevna—you’ll fall in love with her. . . .’ A week later he wrote to Annenkov: ‘I’ve even got myself a *lorette* for a mistress—a most charming Polish woman, with whom I’m sure you’ll fall in love.’

While indulging in these ‘winter excesses’, as he afterwards referred to them, he spent a great deal of time with Countess Lambert, the daughter of a former Finance Minister and the wife of

The Russian Sphinx

an aide-de-camp of Alexander II. The Countess was an unattractive middle-aged woman, intelligent and gentle, whose life had not been particularly happy and who seems at times to have been greatly, and even perilously, attracted to Turgenev, who spent hours in her cosy little upstairs drawing room, confiding to her his most secret hopes and fears. 'In spite of the difference of our opinions,' he wrote to her from Spasskoye in May 1856, 'there exists between us, if I am not mistaken, a sympathy of feelings, and this bond is more durable than the bond based on an identity of opinions.' And he added: 'Apropos, what kind and charming eyes you have. This *Apropos* is perhaps not so *à propos*. Forgive me if in this case I ought not to have written what I thought.' A month later he told her that the thought that they would exchange their ideas and feelings gave him great pleasure. 'It gives me even greater pleasure', he went on, 'to think that the time will come when, God willing, we shall meet again and I hope finally become friends. A time comes in the life of men as well as women when what one values most is a quiet and enduring friendship.'

He was back in Spasskoye in May. Two years earlier he had dismissed his estate manager Tyutshev, whom he had accused of behaving as though he owned Spasskoye and also of ruining him. In his place he had installed his favourite uncle Nicholas, giving him two undated promissory notes for 50,000 roubles in case he (Turgenev) should die—and it was his old uncle who eventually ruined him. In the spring of 1856, however, nothing had yet occurred to cast a cloud over their friendly relations. The old man installed himself in Spasskoye with a young wife, two daughters of his first marriage and a sister-in-law, an old maid who was fond of animals and kept canaries, pigeons, a tame magpie and even a grass-snake in her little room. The weather was not particularly good that spring, the sky was overcast, the wind kept howling in the tall trees of the park, and a thin sheet of rain descended continuously. But everything was green already, and his dogs looked very picturesque on the grass in the distance whenever the sun succeeded in breaking through the clouds. Ever since his arrival in the country, a strange unrest had taken hold of him. He had applied for a passport to travel abroad and he had good hopes of getting it with the help of Countess Lambert. It was curious: for barely nine

The Russian Sphinx

months earlier the prospect of going to France—to Courtavenel—did not tempt him. His daughter had been placed in a boarding school. Pauline Viardot seems a last to have broken her long silence and written to him about Paulinette who, she told him, was almost as tall as herself. Paulinette, too, had been writing to her father, asking him to come to France. ‘I do want to see you badly,’ he wrote back, ‘... but when? That is the question.’ The Crimean war was still on, but he promised to come to Paris in the spring. He hoped she was applying herself diligently to her music lessons: ‘Just imagine’, he wrote, ‘my astonishment when I hear you play some beautiful Beethoven sonata—*c’est ça qui sera beau!*’ Alas, poor Paulinette had no ear for music! Nor was it for her he was longing so much when at last he got his passport. ‘Oh, Countess,’ he wrote to Countess Lambert, ‘what a stupid thing it is—this longing for happiness after one’s faith in happiness has gone! However, I hope all this will calm down and I shall once more acquire—though not entirely—that special kind of repose, full of inner attention and quiet emotion, which is so necessary to a writer and, generally, to an artist.’ What a nuisance his great love was to him! If only he had been like any ordinary man and possessed the power of self-deception! But he knew very well what was going to happen. He knew, as he wrote later to Countess Lambert, that he ought to have stayed at home. ‘I am not counting on *happiness* for myself any more, that is, a happiness in the *uneasy* meaning of the word as it is understood by young hearts,’ he wrote to Countess Lambert on 10 June (O.S.), six weeks before his departure for Paris. ‘It is absurd to think of the flowers when the time for flowering has passed. God grant that there should at least be some kind of fruit, though these vain attempts to recapture the past might only interfere with its ripening. . . . However, we’re all wise when it comes to uttering words: let some silly idea cross your mind and you’ll go chasing after it like mad.’ Why, he was even more ridiculous than Don Quixote! ‘When I look back upon my past life,’ he wrote in the same letter, ‘I seem to have done nothing but chase after shadows. Don Quixote at least believed in the beauty of his Dulcinea, but our modern Don Quixotes see clearly that their Dulcineas are as ugly as sin, but they still run after them.’ That was not all. He realised, too, that if he went back to Pauline Viardot

The Russian Sphinx

after six years of separation, he would have to give up all hope of marriage. 'To go abroad at my age', he wrote to Countess Lambert, 'means to resign oneself finally to the life of a gipsy and give up all thoughts of married life. It can't be helped! Such, it seems, is my fate. However, this, too, must be said: men who are infirm of purpose like to invent "fate" for themselves; that saves them from the necessity of having a will of their own and frees them of all responsibility towards themselves.'

He had tried, too, to transmute his obsessions into art and in this way perhaps rid himself of them. He wrote his story *Faust*, a more thorough attempt to analyse the influence of art on emotional life. It was Countess Lambert who had given him the idea of the story; she seemed, like Vera, the heroine of *Faust*, to be afraid of the impact of art on her emotions, and Turgenev had tried in vain to persuade her to read Pushkin. The story, as Turgenev wrote to Tolstoy's sister from Paris on 6 January 1857, was written 'at the turning point' of his life when his whole soul 'burst into the last flame of memories, hopes, and youth.' Countess Maria Tolstoy wrote of the 'dual man' in him and he thought she was right; 'but, perhaps', he wrote, 'you don't know the reason for this duality. I will be frank with you. You see I felt bitter at the thought that I was growing old without having experienced full happiness, without having made a comfortable home for myself. My soul is still young and was striving and yearning [for happiness], while my reason, chilled by experience, from time to time succumbed to its transports, and vented its weakness on it by bitterness and irony; and when my soul asked my reason, in its turn, what it had achieved and whether it had succeeded in organising my life on right and reasonable lines, it was compelled to fall silent, and then both of them—reason and soul—gave way to fits of the darkest depression. . . . When you knew me, I still hoped for happiness and did not want to give up this hope; now I have finally given it up.'

But even in *Faust* the position of the two lovers is hopeless from the beginning. 'Say what you will,' the hero of the story writes to his friend, 'love is egoism; and at my age it is not fair to be an egoist: a man of 37 [Turgenev's age at the time] must not live for himself, he must have an aim in life, he must be of some use to his fellow-men, he must perform his duty, his work.' The heroine of the

The Russian Sphinx

story is in an even greater dilemma: for she is a married woman who has been brought up by her mother to dread art because art released those pent-up emotional forces which played havoc with people's lives. As an imaginative expression of this dread, Turgenev introduced the supernatural element in the story which Herzen severely criticised. And the moral of it all? 'Life', the hero of the story sums up, 'is not a joke or fun; it isn't even pleasure—life is hard work. Renunciation, constant renunciation—that is her secret meaning, the clue to her mystery; not the fulfilment of cherished thoughts and dreams, however exalted they may be—the performance of one's duty, that is what man ought to care about; unless he lays those chains upon himself—the iron chains of duty, he will never reach, without falling, the end of his journey; when we are young, we think: the freer we are, the better, the further we shall go. Young people have a right to think like that; but it is shameful to delude oneself when the stern face of truth has a last looked straight into your eyes.'

That was what Turgenev thought *before* he left for France. '*Entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren*,'—the line from Goethe's *Faust*, which he put as the epigraph to his story, expressed his own determination at the time; but he could not '*entbehren*', he could not do without his Pauline, however strong his sense of duty towards his vocation as a writer and however little he deceived himself about the outcome of his meeting with the woman he loved with a passionate intensity beyond his control. It was Homer's legend of the Sirens come true, except that, unlike Odysseus, Turgenev had no faithful companions to tie him safely to the mast. When on 21 July his 'bark', as he wrote to Botkin, quoting Byron, was 'on the sea' (he had travelled by sea again to Stettin with Sir Charles John Napier, Commander-in-Chief of the British fleet in the Baltic during the Crimean War, as his fellow-passenger), his fate was sealed. And he knew it.

PART SIX

The Crisis

2

‘Usually’, Turgenev said to Fet in Paris, ‘poets are considered mad, but when you analyse their actions, they are not as mad as you expected.’ This is quite a good description of the strange ‘nervous and physical crisis’ Turgenev, in his own words, underwent during the two years that followed his arrival in France in August 1856. For what had happened was not new nor unexpected. He had been through it all before and he had foreseen it all. He had never deceived himself about Pauline Viardot’s feelings towards him. Yet when, after a short spell of happiness that followed the resumption of his liaison with the opera singer in 1856, the inevitable happened and she left him for a man who engaged her emotions more powerfully than he could ever have hoped to do, the bottom seems to have fallen out of his world, and he behaved like a man who was completely out of his mind. No doubt, the brief interlude of happiness was the cause of it all. But for that he would have borne the blow with more equanimity. He loved Pauline Viardot, he confessed to Tolstoy, more than ever and more than anyone in the world. He was very happy, he told Botkin, who had congratulated him on the great time he was having at Courtavenel. Never had he felt so quiet and serene. ‘I was very happy,’ he reiterated his last statement six weeks later, ‘perhaps because the last flowers of autumn are sweeter than the first blooms of spring.’ Every day he spent at Courtavenel was a sheer joy, he told the same correspondent. They played scenes from comedies and tragedies. His daughter Paulinette (‘being a young Ivan Sergeyevich in a skirt’, Fet remarks unkindly, ‘she could not lay

The Crisis

claim to any beauty') was very sweet in Racine's *Iphigénie*. He himself was extremely bad in all parts, but that did not interfere with their enjoyment in the least. They played all the symphonies and sonatas of Beethoven, giving special names to each sonata. Then Turgenev invented a fascinating game of his own: he drew five or six profiles and everyone was expected to write under each what sort of person they thought it represented. The result was very funny, and needless to say Pauline Viardot was more clever, more subtle and more accurate than any of them. The game was so successful that Turgenev kept the sketches in the hope of using some of the characterisations for his stories; many years later he revived the game in Baden-Baden. 'In a word', Turgenev concluded his letter to Botkin, 'we were as happy as trout in a stream when the sun shines through its limpid waters. Have you ever watched them on such a day? They are very happy then—I'm sure of that.'

And yet a remark made by Turgenev to Fet during the poet's visit to Courtavenel in September, shows that even at that time Turgenev's powers of self-observation were as keen as ever and that deep down in his heart he resented his complete enslavement to a far from beautiful woman of thirty-five. When Fet arrived in Paris he found Turgenev still in his small flat in the rue de l'Arcade, consisting of two rooms: a tiny bedroom and a small drawing room with a clock on the mantelpiece in front of a large looking-glass. After showing him round Paris, Turgenev left for Courtavenel. A fortnight later Fet received a letter inviting him to come down to Pauline Viardot's country house, but when he arrived there Turgenev was out shooting with Louis Viardot. No one expected him, Turgenev, as usual, forgetting to let the Viardots know of his coming. However, everything came right in the end. They had dinner: 'A French bouillon,' Fet writes, 'weak as water, a microscopic meat pasty, kidney beans with artistically cut slices of transparent ham, and thin little pancakes or omelettes with jam.' The poet was very hungry; he was a huge, thick-set man with an enormous appetite, and he had eaten scarcely anything the whole day. He tried to be as polite as possible in spite of his meagre, though artistic, meal, but the impression he left was a most lamentable one. 'An army officer *endimanché*', Turgenev wrote to

The Crisis

Tolstoy. 'Gold rings on his fingers, a St. Anne ribbon in his buttonhole, telling the stupidest jokes in broken French—their humour completely evaporated; round eyes, a round mouth, an idiotic look of astonishment on the face—awful!'

After dinner the ladies in the drawing room had a shock: Fet had followed Turgenev upstairs to his room where they started a violent political discussion. 'Hearing a deafening noise in an incomprehensible guttural tongue,' Fet writes, 'the Courtavenel ladies cried, "Goodness, they'll kill each other!" And when Turgenev, raising his arms and shouting, "My dear chap, for Christ's sake don't say that!" fell on his knees before me and a sudden hush descended on the house, the ladies cried, "Now they have killed each other!"' The incident is confirmed by Turgenev. 'I argued with him in my room so much', he wrote to Tolstoy, 'that the house shook with the wild sounds of Slavonic speech; in a word, it was terrible!' Still, such violent discussions with his die-hard friends were no novelty to Turgenev; what followed was an amazing confession which astonished Fet even more than the frugal meal at dinner. 'Yes,' said Turgenev, after mentioning how grateful he was to Pauline Viardot for looking after his daughter, 'I'm completely in the power of that woman. She has for ever shut out everything else from me. The only time I'm really happy is when a woman steps on my neck and presses my face into the mud. God,' he cried, wringing his hands over his head and pacing up and down the room, 'what damned good luck it is for a woman to be ugly!'

This self-avowal has been generally interpreted (and, first of all by Fet himself) as revealing Turgenev's deeply rooted masochistic tendencies; but could it not be equally well interpreted as Turgenev's deeply rooted resentment against Pauline Viardot's power over him, a power that derived its main force from the fact that he never really possessed her? In his novels, it is true, the women are never passive, but neither are the men. If Turgenev had really been a masochist, the fact would have come out in his novels. But there is no sign of masochistic tendencies in Rudin, Lavretsky, Insarov, Bazarov, Litvinov, Nezhdanov and Solomin. Some of them, like Bazarov and Litvinov, find themselves for a time in the power of a woman, but they have no difficulty in mastering the situation because the women are also in love with them. Only one Turgenev

The Crisis

hero—Sanin in *Spring Waters*—becomes the abject slave of a woman, and that is because the woman merely wants to possess him but is never possessed by him. Turgenev, in fact, did not *delight* in having his face pressed in the mud by a woman's heel; even from Fet's version of his confession it seems clear that he *hated* it. But it is also true that, the situation being what it was, he could not help himself. 'To do her justice,' Fet writes in his memoirs, 'Madame Viardot had at her command an enormous arsenal of good taste and good reading.' She was also one of the greatest singers of her time. Fet was not as keen on music as Turgenev, but even he could not help feeling deeply moved when she sang a Russian folk song 'in impeccable Russian'. Turgenev's love for her was too overpowering and too complete an emotion, and she must have found it a very wearying experience. The rift between them, however, did not occur at once. When Turgenev left Courtavenel for Paris at the end of October he already suspected that she was having an affair with Ary Scheffer, who was painting her portrait at the time. On 6 November he wrote to Botkin about his literary plans. He had already done the preliminary work on his next novel, *A Nobleman's Nest*, and was writing *A Journey to the Woodlands*, part of which, the description of the bear hunt by the peasants, he had written four years earlier. But, he explained to Botkin, his work depended on whether or not his 'damned illness' would let him do any work in the mornings. His illness had first attacked him six years earlier before he had left France for Russia, when Pauline Viardot had jilted him for another lover. It was entirely a nervous affliction, as Turgenev himself realised, but as one of his phobias was that he might die of the same disease as his father, namely gall-stones, the purely nervous character of his illness soon assumed the physical form of 'a pain in the bladder'. This had come back to torment him again on the fourth day after his return to Paris. It was a terribly cold winter (people in the poorer districts froze in their houses) and he had just moved to a new and warmer flat in the rue de Rivoli. There Pauline Viardot stayed with him for a few days, 'behaving', Paulinette recalled many years later, 'as though she were at home.' It was the first time the young girl apparently realised the true nature of her father's relations with Pauline Viardot, a fact she

The Crisis

could not forgive her, being unable, as she said, to reconcile herself to a situation in which a woman married to another man should treat her father as her real husband.

The pain in his 'damned bladder' came and went in strict conformance, it would seem, with the ups and downs of his relations with Pauline Viardot. When the final rift between them came—and it must have been preceded by a violent scene between them, for Pauline Viardot refused to see him or to answer his letters for a year after it—his illness took a turn for the worse and was to plague him for the next sixteen months. 'I am as capable of writing now', he told Panayev on 24 January 1857, 'as of singing or dancing on a rope.' He did finish *A Journey to the Woodlands*, but it turned out so 'gloomy' that he was not sure whether he ought to publish it. The lyrical passage at the end of 'the first day' in the story is, indeed, a faithful description of his mood. 'Oh, my heart,' he wrote, '... try to forget, if you want peace, reconcile yourself to a meek acceptance of ... the bitter words "forgive" and "farewell". Do not look back, do not try to remember, do not long for a place where ... hope is crowned with the flowers of spring ... where love, like the dew at daybreak, shines with tears of rapture. Do not look where bliss, strength and faith repose—that is no place for us.' In his letters he was referring more and more to his intention of returning to Russia. 'I shall most certainly be back in Russia in the spring,' he wrote to Tolstoy, 'although with my departure from here I shall have to take leave of my last dreams of happiness.'

At the end of February Turgenev's despair reached its peak. 'I am not going to speak to you about myself,' he wrote to Botkin on 1 March. 'I have become mentally bankrupt—there is no need to say anything more. I feel all the time like dirt that people have forgotten to sweep out—that is my *Stimmung*. . . . As for my work, except for *A Journey to the Woodlands* I shall not publish (or write) another line as long as I live. The day before yesterday I did not burn (because I was afraid of being accused of imitating Gogol) but tore up and threw into the water-closet all my writings, plans, etc. All this is nonsense. I have no particularly original talent, no artistic integrity—there were a few poetic chords, but they have died away and are heard no more—I do not want to repeat myself—it is time I retired! This—believe me—is not an outburst of

The Crisis

disappointment, it is the expression or the fruit of a slowly matured conviction. . . . I am retiring as a writer with a tendency, my place will be taken by Shchedrin (the public wants coarse and spicy things now), and poetic and full natures like Tolstoy will find and represent clearly and fully what I have only hinted at. As I have a pretty good mastery of the Russian language, I intend to translate *Don Quixote* if I am well enough.' Knowing very well that Botkin would never take him seriously, Turgenev, whose subsequent threats 'to lay down his pen' Dostoevsky satirised in *The Devils*, added: 'You will probably think that I am exaggerating it all and you won't believe me. You will, I hope, see that I have never been more serious or more sincere. Thank you for sending me your article on Fet. If I find that I too can write such articles, I may try my hand at it. But no more fiction for me! You know that I stopped writing poetry as soon as I convinced myself that I was not a poet; and, according to my present convictions, I am as good a novelist as I was a poet. . . . I should', he concluded, 'have spent my time very pleasantly here if', he repeated Rakitin's phrase in *A Month in the Country*, 'I had not been poisoned.'

Tolstoy, who was on a visit to Paris at the time, wrote to Botkin: 'Turgenev is ill physically and even more morally. His unhappy liaison with Madame Viardot and also his daughter keep him in a climate which is harmful to him, and he is a pitiful sight!'

Turgenev did not return home. To combat his depression he read a great deal. He read *The Confessions of an Opium Eater* twice through and he also read the Latin authors. 'I have swallowed Suetonius,' he wrote to Herzen, 'Sallust (whom I did not like at all), Tacitus and parts of Titus Livius. You will ask: what is the meaning of this Latin mania? I don't know; perhaps it is due to the spirit of the age.' He also made his first acquaintance with French writers. He met Prosper Mérimée in the middle of February. 'I have met Mérimée,' he wrote to a correspondent on 1 March. 'He is like his works: cold, elegant, with a strongly developed feeling of beauty and a sense of proportion, and he completely lacks not only any faith in, but also enthusiasm for, anything.' Mérimée had by that time translated a number of Russian classics and written articles on Gogol and Turgenev's *Diary of a Sportsman*. Turgenev had dinner at Mérimée's a few weeks later, but his opinion of the

The Crisis

Frenchman did not improve. 'A Druzhinin *en grand*,' he told Annenkov. 'Just as cold and just as fond of all sorts of obscenities.' He also, incidentally, met Harriet Beecher Stowe, who was on a visit to Paris at the end of 1856, and he found her 'a kind, sensible and shy American woman'. She had her two daughters with her, he wrote to Druzhinin: 'red-haired, in red coats and fierce crinolines—the oddest figures imaginable.'

2

Turgenev's impression of the French literary scene in the late fifties was far from favourable.

'I must confess', he wrote to Sergey Aksakov, 'that it is all extremely petty, prosaic, empty and without a trace of talent. A sort of lifeless bustle, pretentiousness, commonplaceness and impotence, an utter lack of faith and convictions—that is the sort of thing you meet here wherever you go. The best of them feel it themselves—but just groan and moan. There is no criticism—only a wretched acquiescence with everybody and everything; everyone is flogging his own hobbyhorse and fawning on everyone else so that they should fawn on him—that is all. One versifier takes it into his head to go in for realism, and with an effort and affected simplicity writes a poem on 'Steam' or 'Machines'; another screams that one ought to return to Zeus, Eros and Pallas—and writes poems on them, taking great pleasure in putting Greek names into his miserable French verses; and neither has a drop of poetry in him. Through this paltry uproar one can hardly distinguish the jarring notes of Hugo, the feeble whining of Lamartine, and the empty chatter of Sand; Balzac¹ is set up as an idol, and the new school of realists is crawling in the dust before him, slavishly venerating

¹ 'Balzac provides an astounding example of a great talent existing in one and the same man side by side with a total incomprehension of artistic truth,' Turgenev wrote in 1868 in a foreword to a Russian translation of a novel by Du Camp. 'All his characters are so marvellously typical, they are so exquisitely worked out and finished to the last detail—and yet not one of them has ever lived or indeed could have lived, and not one of them possesses even one particle of the truth which makes the characters of Tolstoy's *Cossacks*, for instance, so vitally alive.'

'I could never read ten pages of Balzac at a time, so repugnant and alien is he to me,' Turgenev wrote to a correspondent a few months before his death.

The Crisis

Chance, which they glorify as Reality and Truth; meanwhile the general level of morality drops lower and lower every day, and one and all are obsessed with the lure of gold—that is France for you!’

As for the Russian literary scene, Turgenev was glad to get good reports from his Petersburg friends about a remarkable change in Tolstoy, who, Druzhinin was pleased to say, was growing ‘more and more intelligent and more and more educated every day’. ‘He even understands *King Lear*,’ Druzhinin wrote to Turgenev, ‘and drank to the health of Shakespeare! He is reading the *Iliad*, and in order to understand all our literary movements, is going to read all Belinsky’s articles.’ A most remarkable conversion, if true. Above all, the ‘troglodyte’ had become ‘so meek and full of civilisation’ that Druzhinin could not help recalling his ‘violent rages’ of the previous year. Botkin, too, wrote to Turgenev about the amazing and almost incredible change in Tolstoy, who seemed to be filled with a passion for study and knowledge and ‘revelled’ in Beethoven’s music.

Turgenev made haste to express his delight at the news to Tolstoy himself. ‘Your acquaintance with Shakespeare’, he wrote somewhat sententiously to Tolstoy on 15 January, ‘or, to put it more correctly, the fact that you have drawn nearer to him, pleases me very much. He is like Nature; think what a villainously dismal face she sometimes has (call to your mind the horrible, rainy, slimy October days in our steppe region), and yet even then there is necessity and truth and (get ready: your hair is going to stand on end) expediency in her. Do get better acquainted with *Hamlet*, too, and with *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, *Henry IV*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*. Do not let any external incongruities deter you; try to get to the very heart of the work and you will admire the harmony and the profound truth of that great creative spirit. I can see you smile as you read these lines, but just think that *perhaps* Turgenev is right. After all, you never can tell.’ By that time the gulf between them had so narrowed that, Turgenev wrote to Tolstoy, it was no wider than a crack in the ground.

Tolstoy arrived in Paris on 21 February and found Nekrasov, who had just returned from Italy where he had gone to recover from a grave illness, staying with Turgenev. He persuaded Turgenev to accompany him to Dijon for a change of air. But they

The Crisis

were back in Paris in a few days, Turgenev feeling as ill and depressed as ever. In April Tolstoy suddenly left for Geneva, from where he sent Turgenev a most remarkable letter 'in which', Turgenev wrote to Annenkov, 'he calls Paris a Sodom and Gomorrah and compares himself to a stone lying at the bottom of a river and being gradually covered with slime.' Tolstoy, it seemed, was looking for a river with less slime and that was why he had gone to Geneva. 'He is a queer man,' Turgenev wrote. 'I have never met anyone like him and I don't understand him at all. He's a mixture of a poet, a calvinist, a fanatic and a fine gentleman. He reminds me of Rousseau, but he is more honest than Rousseau and, at the same time, an unsympathetic character.' Much as he wished, Turgenev could not get on with Tolstoy. Their points of view were poles apart. But in spite of that he never wavered in his opinion that, as he told Druzhinin, 'having done fermenting, this wine will become a drink worthy of the gods.'

His nervous breakdown did not prevent Turgenev from keeping up his connections with the Russian colony in Paris. There was young Princess Meshchersky, 'a perfect Gretchen', as Turgenev described her in a letter to Tolstoy, whose beauty made more than an ordinary impression on his 'sensitive heart' and whom, Mrs. Panayev maliciously suggests, he contemplated marrying. Then there was Prince Trubetskoy, a Russian grandee, who had settled in France and become a devout Catholic and at whose house Turgenev was a frequent visitor. The prince was a great eccentric and so was his wife, the princess, who spent most of the day shut up in her rooms. At exactly eight o'clock the prince would say to his visitors (he always used the same phrase): '*Je crois que nous pouvons passer chez la Princesse.*' The visitors would then troop after the prince to his wife's drawing room, where the princess was waiting for them reclining on a sofa (she suffered, or imagined that she suffered, from bad legs). The princess was an atheist. '*Que voulez-vous,*' the prince used to say, '*je l'adore, mais c'est une folle.*' The princess's opinion of her husband was no less frank. '*Il a un cœur d'or,*' she used to say, '*mais c'est un idiot.*' What made Turgenev so frequent a visitor at Prince Trubetskoy's palatial home was not so much the magnificent hunting opportunities at the prince's country estate of Bellefontaine near Paris, as his beautiful young daughter,

The Crisis

for even while suffering from the pangs of frustrated love he could not resist the attraction of female beauty, particularly if it was combined with the exquisite manners of an aristocratic upbringing. He himself was, as always, immaculately dressed, sported a monocle, and wore a short, thick grizzled beard and long hair.

3

At the end of May 1857, Turgenev went for a short trip to London to see Herzen, who was about to publish his famous periodical *The Bell*, and whom Turgenev supplied with the latest news from Russia as well as with articles. From London he wrote to his daughter in Paris, asking her for information about the whereabouts of Pauline Viardot who did not answer his letters. It is likely, though not certain, that during his stay in England he also visited Manchester to see the great exhibition of English art treasures.

On his return to Paris, Turgenev went to the little spa of Sinzig near Coblenz where he seems to have recovered sufficiently to write his story *Assya*, which contains several veiled and far from flattering references to Pauline Viardot under the guise of a 'designing widow' who preferred 'a red Bavarian lieutenant' to the hero of the story. A letter he wrote to his daughter from Sinzig at the beginning of July seems to throw some light on the real reason why Pauline Viardot's unfaithfulness had had such a shattering effect on him this time. 'Don't forget to tell me', he wrote, 'what you may have learnt of Madame Viardot's health. I have written to her, but have had no reply.' Turgenev's solicitude for Pauline Viardot's health was due to the fact that she was about to give birth to a baby and that he had good reason to believe that he was the father of it. Indeed, his extraordinary excitement, on learning that she had given birth to a son, can hardly be explained otherwise. 'Hurrah! ypa! *Lebe hoch! Vivat! Evviva! Zito!*' he wrote to Pauline Viardot on 24 June. 'Long live little Paul, long live his mother, long live his father, long live the whole family! Bravo! I told you that everything would be all right and that you would have a son! I congratulate you and kiss you all!' And in a special note to Pauline he added: 'You will drop me a line as soon as you can,

The Crisis

won't you? And was your awakening on 21 July pleasant? And the cries of the baby? Is there any music that can compare with it? In fact, everything has turned up trumps.' Did he get a reply? There is no evidence of it.

Before parting from Nekrasov, Turgenev had discussed his relations with Pauline Viardot with him and apparently agreed never to go back to Courtavenel. But on his return to Paris in August, he did go back and spent two months there. What his reception was can be gleaned from his letter to Nekrasov on 24 August. 'As you see,' he wrote, 'I am here, that is to say, I have done the stupid thing you warned me against. But it was absolutely impossible for me to do otherwise.' Why? Was it because he wanted to see his son? Would anything else have induced him to go there, knowing, as he did, that Pauline Viardot was still Ary Scheffer's mistress? But, of course, the irony of the situation was that he could never be sure that he *was* Paul's father.¹ It was the thought that Pauline Viardot was deceiving him with her real lover even during the brief period of his 'happiness' at Courtavenel that must have preyed on his mind all the time and caused his imaginary illness to torment him for another year.

Shortly after his arrival at Sinzig Turgenev had another encounter with Tolstoy, who had left Switzerland, where he wrote his highly moral story *Luzern*, for Sinzig, but got stuck at Baden-Baden where he lost all his money at the roulette-tables. 'I have received a letter from Tolstoy today', Turgenev wrote to Botkin, who was in Dieppe at the time, on 28 June, 'in which he informs me that he has lost all his money at roulette and asks me to send him at once 500 francs, etc. He was coming here, but stopped at Baden and was ruined.' Turgenev went to Tolstoy's rescue just as eight years later he came to the rescue of Dostoevsky in similar circumstances. He arrived in Baden-Baden on 31 July. Tolstoy borrowed money from him but lost it again, and Turgenev had to borrow money to save him a second time. '*Vanichka*', Tolstoy wrote in his diary (he was very fond of pet names), 'is very sweet. He made me feel thoroughly ashamed of myself.' And on another day: '*Vanichka* left. He was very severe with me.' Turgenev wrote

¹ Paul Viardot, who grew up to be a concert violinist, always regarded Turgenev as his father and Paulinette as his half-sister.

The Crisis

to Botkin on 4 August: 'I must tell you about Tolstoy. I wrote to you from Baden that I intended to take him to Dieppe with me. But things turned out quite otherwise. I found him without a penny and suffering from —. He sat in Baden as in a cesspool and had completely lost his head. I proposed that he should come with me and he agreed; then he suddenly received a letter from home in which he was told that his sister, unable to live any longer with her husband, who had four mistresses, etc., had left him and was now staying with her brother. . . . Tolstoy decided to leave for Russia immediately and, as I had no money on me, I borrowed some and gave it to him. The doctor, for his part, had given him all the necessary instructions and pills, and on Saturday Tolstoy will already be sailing from Stettin to Petersburg. . . . I have read his short story *Luzern*,' Turgenev concluded, 'and I'm afraid I did not like it. It's a mixture of Rousseau, Thackeray and the Greek Orthodox short catechism. Like Hercules, he finds himself at the cross-roads; I only hope he takes the right road.'

The improvement in Turgenev's health at Sinzig did not last. Pauline Viardot's continued silence after the birth of her son (and the way she ignored him at Courtavenel) had the inevitable effect. 'It seems', he wrote to Countess Lambert, 'that the local waters are harmful to me and I feel rotten and have to go away—where, I do not know.' As he had to transact some business with Herzen he went to Boulogne, intending to go to London for a day. But in Boulogne his condition grew worse and he decided to stay there and undergo electrical treatment by a local doctor. He made up his mind again to go back to Russia, but at the same time he wished he could find some excuse for going to Courtavenel. This state of indecision worried him so much that his health began to suffer in good earnest. 'I have decided to go back to Russia and stay there for a long time,' he wrote to Countess Lambert from Boulogne. 'I have been roaming about the world and leading the life of a gipsy long enough. . . . My illness has aged me by twenty years. . . . I have given up work altogether. . . .' Ten days later he wrote to Botkin still from Boulogne: 'I am going to Courtavenel. My daughter is already there and waiting for me.' And he added in French: '*Je ne suis plus beau ni à voir, ni à entendre, je ne suis plus que de la merde; a man*,' he went on, 'who grinds his teeth with pain and vexation from

The Crisis

morning till evening and knocks his head against the wall at night is no longer a man and is not worthy of human society; I reek of a corpse, and I'm thoroughly sick of myself. . . . When thinking of me, think of someone who is dead, of someone who is fond of you as much as a corpse can be said to be fond of anyone. . . . Here, briefly, is what my illness is like,' he wrote to Botkin two days later (18 August): 'I feel an excruciating nervous pain (like a tooth-ache). . . . It starts at seven o'clock in the morning and it goes on sometimes without a pause till one o'clock at night. . . . What worries me particularly is that formerly the pain disappeared or got perceptibly weaker as soon as I left Paris, while now the change of place does not make the slightest difference, and I am in the same agony here as in Sinzig.'

In Courtavenel things did not improve, though, fortunately, Pauline Viardot was away most of the time. Turgenev spent some time at Bellefontaine, where he went shooting with Louis Viardot. Then he went to Paris for a few days where he met Botkin, Goncharov and Fet. Goncharov read them the first chapters of *Oblomov*. It was a very hot day and it was very stuffy in Goncharov's hotel room. Poor Fet felt like sleeping all the time and, he confessed, had not the slightest idea what the novel was about. Turgenev liked the novel. 'Tell Goncharov again', he wrote to Botkin from Courtavenel, 'that *Oblomov* is an excellent thing, but must be cut, particularly as it consists of a series of dialogues and is, anyway, liable to tire the reader a little.'

On 28 August he was in Paris again, acting as best man at Fet's wedding to Botkin's sister. Fet had put on full military dress for the ceremony in the Paris Greek Orthodox church and, he writes in his memoirs, kept glaring angrily at Turgenev, who was bursting with laughter as he held over the bridegroom's head the wreath of artificial flowers which was so strangely out of keeping with his military uniform. At the end of the wedding dinner, Fet records, Turgenev cried: 'I'm so drunk that I'm going to sit down on the floor and cry.' Whenever anything happened to take his mind off Pauline Viardot, he forgot all about his 'damned bladder' and was his old cheerful self again.

4

Turgenev did not go back to Russia. After staying at Courtavenel till the middle of October, he left with Botkin for Rome where he remained for the next five months. He went to Italy, he wrote to Tolstoy, first, because he was loath to return to Russia in winter; secondly, because he did not want to return there empty-handed and he hoped to do some work in Rome; thirdly, because he liked the idea of visiting Italy with Botkin who was a great connoisseur of works of art, and, fourthly, because he still hoped to be able to meet Pauline Viardot in the spring before leaving for Petersburg. His last hope was perhaps not unconnected with the serious illness of his rival Ary Scheffer.

Immediately on their arrival in Rome at the end of October (they had travelled by road from Nice to Genoa), Turgenev wrote to his daughter asking her to let him know at once all the news about Pauline Viardot. 'I had hoped to find a letter from her on my arrival here,' he wrote, 'but it seems that those who are absent are always wrong. . . . How is Ary Scheffer? Has Madame Viardot gone to London? To all these questions reply at once and—quickly!' He wrote to Pauline herself, but received no reply, with the result that he gave way to another fit of depression. 'I'm all broken up,' he wrote to Fet, 'just as we used to break up an ant-hill when we were children. How is one to put it together again?'

Turgenev at last sat down to write his second novel—*A Nobleman's Nest*—whose chief character, he told Countess Lambert, was to be a deeply religious girl, and the question of dilettantism in literature occupied him intensely. Tolstoy had declared in a letter to Botkin that he was very glad that he had not listened to Turgenev and had not become only a writer. What a man! Turgenev thought. He insisted on walking on his head although he had an excellent pair of legs. 'You say', he wrote to Tolstoy on 7 December 1857, 'that you are very glad not to have listened to my advice and become only a writer. I don't want to argue with you, but one thing puzzles me. If you are not a writer, what are you? An army officer, a landowner, a philosopher, a founder of a new religion, a civil servant, a business man? . . . You would have been right,' he

The Crisis

resumed the discussion in another letter on 29 January 1858, 'if by advising you to be only a writer, I had just some lyrical twittering in mind, but at present we have no time for birds singing in a tree. All I wanted to say was that every man, without ceasing to be a man, must be a specialist. Specialism excludes dilettantism (forgive all these "isms"), for to be a dilettante means to be artistically impotent. Till now, I'm afraid, one can still see the dilettante in all you have done, a very gifted dilettante, no doubt, but still a dilettante; I should like to see you at the bench with your sleeves rolled up and in a workman's overalls!'

Turgenev's reference to the 'lyrical twittering' meant that in his new novel he was determined to deal with one of the most important problems facing Russia at that moment—the problem of converting the serf-owner into a landowner. 'Next winter', he wrote to Countess Lambert, 'I shall be a landowner and not a serf-owner and a gentleman.' Lavretsky, the hero of his new novel, goes back to his estates with the same intention of becoming a *land-owner*, that is, a farmer who works on and lives by his land. 'I have decided', Turgenev wrote to Tolstoy, 'to devote the whole of next year to bringing about a final settlement with my peasants. I'll give them everything, if necessary, but I shall cease to be a "gentleman".'

The news that the first steps for the emancipation of the serfs were being taken by the Russian government reached Turgenev in November. He immediately got in touch with a number of influential Russians in Rome, including the Grand Duchess Yelena Pavlovna and Prince Cherkassky, and they all met to discuss the coming agrarian reforms. These, he told Herzen, had greatly alarmed the Russian nobility whose apparent willingness to comply with the government's decisions concealed 'their most stiff-necked obstinacy, their panic and their cheese-paring miserliness'. What worried Turgenev even more was their utter ignorance of the practical problems of agriculture. He knew that from his own experience as one of the richest landowners in his district. He therefore submitted a memorandum to the Russian government in which he pointed out that it was fear and ignorance that were chiefly responsible for the opposition to the proposed reforms. In his view, out of twenty landowners barely five had any idea of 'the

The Crisis

practical forms of agriculture' which supplied them with their means of livelihood. They lacked the necessary administrative and financial knowledge. (Here Turgenev spoke from his own personal experience.) There was no informed public opinion. In such circumstances the agricultural committees set up by the government could do nothing to further the emancipation of the serfs. 'The nobility', Turgenev wrote, 'will bring their fears and prejudices into the committees and will use every means at their disposal to hamper and slow down the work of emancipation.' It was therefore necessary to dispel their misgivings and arouse all the vital social forces in the country to come to the Czar's assistance. These social forces, in Turgenev's opinion, were Russian science and Russian literature. It was freedom of debate that was wanted. 'It is necessary', he wrote, 'to come to the aid of public opinion, to make it possible for science, experience and knowledge to raise their independent and conscientious voices, to gather together their scattered forces, to create a platform on which they could meet—in short, to found a journal (or a paper) devoted specially and exclusively to the study of all questions relating to the organisation of the life of the peasants.' This journal—*The Farmer's Guide*—should in Turgenev's opinion bear an official character, but should also allow a free and unhampered expression of views. 'My solitary voice', Turgenev concluded, 'would be of no avail if I were not convinced that I am expressing the unanimous opinion of my fellow landowners when I say that we are all ready to come to the aid of the government, which we always obeyed but which we only recently grew to love. We do not want to exaggerate our importance, but we feel that we can be useful to the authorities. . . .'

The authorities, however, thought otherwise. The last thing they wanted was the creation of a free public opinion, and the idea that a government journal should allow 'a free and unhampered expression of views' must have seemed grotesque to them. Turgenev was told that his proposals were considered 'premature'. His memorandum, indeed, justifies Herzen's opinion of him as 'a non-political nature'. The truth is that his own interests were too closely bound up with the economic privileges of his class for him to be able to take an entirely independent line. He could not afford to give up his annual income from his estates even if such a thing

The Crisis

were feasible at the time and he was too absorbed in his work and in his private life—the source from which he drew all his inspiration—to make sure that his estates were run properly. When Tolstoy told him of the rumours about his uncle's mismanagement of his estates, all he could write in reply was: 'It is not for the first time that rumours reach me that my uncle is not managing my estates as he should. But what am I to do? I could never cope with it myself.' He makes Lavretsky go back to the land, an idea he had advocated in his first memorandum to the government, but he does not tell his readers what exactly Lavretsky did or whether he was successful in his dealings with his peasants.

Turgenev carried out his 'Hannibal's oath' to destroy serfdom, but the Russian peasant always remained a 'sphinx' to him. As late as December 1868, he wrote his Poem in Prose *Sphinx* as the personification of the Russian peasant whose eyes were 'as silent and enigmatic' as his speeches. 'Where is your Ædipus?' he asked. 'Alas,' he concluded, 'it is not enough to put on a skull-cap [a reference to the Slavophiles and, particularly, to Konstantin Aksakov] to become your Ædipus, O all-Russian sphinx!'

5

In spite of his recurrent fits of depression, Turgenev enjoyed his stay in Rome. 'Rome', he wrote to Annenkov 'is pure enchantment. In no other city have you the constant feeling that the Great, the Beautiful and the Significant is near to you, always surrounds you and that consequently you can enter the sanctuary any time you like. That is why work is so much more pleasant here and solitude does not weigh heavy upon you. And, besides, this wonderful light and air! Add to that that this year is quite a phenomenal one: every day the sky and the earth seem to be celebrating some bright holiday; every morning, as soon as I awaken, a blue radiance shines at me through my window.' Every day he and Botkin went to see the sights. 'The day before yesterday,' he wrote to Annenkov in another letter, 'Botkin and I spent a wonderful day in the Villa Pamfili. Nature here is entrancingly majestic. I am in love with the evergreen oaks, the umbrella-shaped pines and the distant pale blue mountains.' But the memory of Pauline Viardot still threw 'a dark

The Crisis

shroud' over him. One day as he sat talking to friends in the gardens of Monte Pincio he saw a carriage with a woman whom he thought was Pauline drive past. Without a word to his companions, he rushed like mad after it only to discover that he was mistaken.

It was in Rome that he met the Russian painter and mystic Alexander Ivanov, an old friend of Gogol's. Ivanov had spent twenty years painting his vast canvas of the Epiphany. Turgenev visited the Vatican and the Villa d'Este with Ivanov and Botkin and travelled with them to Albano and Frascati, a journey he described in an article published in 1861. It was during that journey that he discovered that Ivanov was suffering from persecution mania and was constantly afraid of being poisoned by his imaginary enemies. Turgenev was often in the company of Russian painters with whom he had furious arguments about art. Botkin was an excellent companion, but, Turgenev thought, he was 'too infected with art'. What he disliked was the strong epicurean streak in him. 'His senile [Botkin was only 48 at the time] and universal disposition towards enjoyment is sometimes very trying,' he wrote to Tolstoy. 'He seems to have a number of mouths in addition to his bodily one: an aesthetic mouth, a philosophic mouth, and so on, and he munches noisily with all of them. But,' Turgenev hastened to add, 'he is an invaluable friend and counsellor.'

Before leaving Rome for a fortnight's stay in Naples, he had his portrait painted in water colours by Nikitin, a young Russian painter, and he found it very like him. The artist seems certainly to have caught the air of melancholy which grew more and more pronounced as the time for his departure from Italy approached. *Assya* had just then been published in the *Contemporary Review*. In a letter to Tolstoy, who did not seem to have liked the story, Turgenev wrote: 'Many of my friends do not praise it and I daresay they are right, and yet I wrote it ardently, almost with tears.' He wrote this letter in Vienna, where he arrived after a short trip to Florence, Milan, Venice and Trieste, in order to consult a specialist. His health, he told Tolstoy, was as bad as ever. 'My illness', he went on, 'had done me a great deal of harm—my best days were poisoned by it—but . . . I am satisfied with the winter I spent in Italy. A few good seeds fell into my soul—whether they will ever germinate, God alone knows. . . . Dear Tolstoy,' he concluded, 'if

The Crisis

only you knew how depressed and sad I feel! Take an example from me: don't let life slip through your fingers—and may God preserve you from the following sensation: life has gone, and yet you feel that it has not yet begun—and you are faced with the uncertainty of youth and all the fruitless emptiness of old age. What you must do to avoid such a calamity, I do not know; but perhaps no such calamity will ever befall you. Accept, at any rate, my sincere wishes for a sound life and sound happiness. This is the wish of a man who is deeply and deservedly unhappy.'

The Vienna specialist confirmed Turgenev's worst expectations but, somehow, the diagnosis, which incidentally, was wrong, did not seem to have unduly worried him. Indeed, when Annenkov met him in Dresden on 10 April 1858, he was surprised to see him looking the picture of health. 'What amazed me most of all about the patient', Annenkov writes, 'was his speech, which was full of humour, imagery and irony.' When he pointed it out to the 'patient', Turgenev said: 'Ah, but don't you see, the organisms of people who have a chronic disease like mine, seem to be stronger than those of healthy people. The disease is taking a rest, letting nature do its best for the patient so as to be able to break out with greater force later on. I should not be surprised if I dropped dead suddenly to the astonishment of all my friends.' It was explanations such as these that very soon made his friends treat Turgenev's complaints as a joke.

Before leaving for London for a consultation with Herzen, whom he continued to supply with material for *The Bell*, Turgenev dashed off to Leipzig where Pauline Viardot was singing. They must somehow or other have patched up their quarrel, for he wrote to Pauline Viardot from London that his health had greatly improved.

6

In London Turgenev lived in furnished rooms in Holles Street, Cavendish Square. He found them very convenient as they included service, laundry and breakfast for only two pounds ten a week. It was during this visit to England that Turgenev met Disraeli, Thackeray, Macaulay and Carlyle, who apparently tried to

The Crisis

convince him of the beneficent rule of an autocrat like the Russian Czar. The most notable event of this visit was the annual dinner of the Royal Literary Fund held in St. Martin's Hall on 25 April 1858. Turgenev owed his invitation to the dinner to Mérimée who had introduced him to Monckton Milnes, M.P., one of its organisers. 'Last Wednesday', Mérimée wrote to a friend on 3 May, 'I was present at a dinner of the Literary Fund, which took place under the chairmanship of Lord Palmerston. . . . It was attended by over 300 writers, or people who call themselves writers, and over 100 ladies who had received the much coveted invitation to watch us eating tough chicken and dry tongue. I was never so drunk with stupidity, as Persognac says.'

Turgenev left a detailed description of the dinner in an article he published in a Petersburg magazine shortly before the foundation of the Russian Literary Fund in 1859. 'The dinner', Turgenev wrote, 'took place in a large hall (St. Martin's Hall); the guests arrived at six o'clock, all wearing tails and white ties. I found the ticket with my name on a plate not far from the president, between Mr. Reeve, one of the chief critics of the *Edinburgh Review*, and Thackeray, who did not, however, turn up, because of illness. Dickens was not there either; for a long time he was one of the most zealous members of the "fund", and even acted (he is an excellent comic) at public performances in aid of it. But last year he quarrelled with the committee whom he accused of spending too much money on the salary of the secretary, the administration etc. The committee replied to his accusations in a pamphlet, a copy of which was distributed at the end of this dinner. . . . During the past year, the Literary Fund distributed £1,000 among necessitous writers. . . .

'Lord Palmerston did not keep us waiting long. He was given a very cordial and respectful reception. I watched this man with particular interest for his name had become so familiar in Russia as a result of the Crimean War that I remember a peasant in the depths of the Woodlands asking me, Is Palmistrion alive? He had an aristocratic and elegant figure and the manners of a man who was used to the exercise of power and was well-bred at the same time, which could not be said of Disraeli, who looks like a dandy and an artist. Palmerston, of course, is a member of the old family of the

The Crisis

Temples. He holds himself very erect, walks with a light step. He has a white face, not too creased, and thin features—only in his eyes did I observe, in addition to an expression of cunning, a sort of senile immobility; his tightly closed lips and drooping cheeks expressed a great deal of indifference, superciliousness and stubbornness; his almost bare skull is not too big and, speaking phrenologically, completely lacks the organ of ideality, that is to say, he has a very receding forehead; his ears are very big. When he laughs his whole face becomes animated and assumes a gay expression which is rare among the English; according to people who know him intimately, he is very good company. He took his seat not without a certain solemnity; on his left sat the Belgian ambassador, and on his right some marquess—the heir to the enormous estate of the Dukes of Bridgewater—who had no other claim to this honour, but in free England even such a claim is sufficient, for every kind of power and, consequently, also the power of money, is held in high esteem there.

‘The dinner was rather bad, like all public dinners. Champagne came with the roast chicken, and the toastmaster, who stood behind Palmerston’s chair, proposed the health of the Queen. All rose from their seats and nine ear-splitting “hurrahs”—three times three—resounded through the hall. The toastmaster was the first to cheer and gave the signal for the rest with a rolled up scroll of paper which he held in his hand like a wand. The health of the queen was drunk with great enthusiasm; she is very popular with her subjects, and, besides, as an English friend of mine remarked, every Englishman who drinks the health of his queen also drinks his own health, so how is one not to be enthusiastic? The shouts, accompanied by the banging of knives on the table, died down and were at once renewed. Palmerston then got up and began his speech. You know, of course, that a short time before he had been forced to resign from the Foreign Office because he had been much too ready to please a certain foreign power. His popularity had greatly suffered, but “the traces of the old flame”—*veteris vestigiae flammæ*—had not yet grown cold. His speech was far from brilliant: he spoke of the importance of literature, compared the life of a writer to the life of a painter and sculptor, said a few words about Queen Victoria’s interest in literature, a statement that was interrupted by

The Crisis

cheers, and paid a tribute to Prince Albert, "with whom" he declared, "it is impossible to talk without improving one's mind." This declaration was met in dead silence; the English, as everyone knows, are not particularly fond of their queen's consort. What interested me especially was Palmerston's diction. He spoke rather slowly, as though hesitating, searched for words, and in between finding them kept on saying, "er—er", accompanying his speech by movements of the right hand, and always found a beautiful and precise ending for his sentences. This clumsiness, this continuous use of "er", these stutterings, are a characteristic feature of English speech; people like Palmerston, who are always making public speeches at meetings, in Parliament and at dinners, never get rid of it. I was told by Englishmen that Fox, Pitt and Sheridan spoke like that; and, strange to say, this characteristic becomes intelligible and almost pleasant as soon as you get to know the character of the English; it adds a sort of naturalness to their speech, a touch of good humour and improvisation, and deprives it of any suspicion of a "phrase". Palmerston's voice sounded a little dull, just like an old man's voice, but it was still quite strong and distinct. (Let me add, incidentally, that this seventy-five-year-old man ate heartily and this year rode on horseback from London to Epsom on Derby Day!) Palmerston sat down amid thunderous applause.

The famous geologist [Sir Roderick] Murchison then proposed the health of Palmerston whom he described as a model Briton. Palmerston thanked him and observed that as a geologist Murchison was interested in the ups and downs of the earth's surface and was therefore particularly capable of appreciating politicians who were also subject to ups and downs. All noticed this goodnatured joke of a retired minister at his own expense, and Palmerston laughed louder than anybody else. The Belgian ambassador then proposed the toast of English literature coupled with the name of Creasy.¹ Who is this Creasy, you will ask. What happened was that originally it was proposed to drink the health of Thackeray, and Thackeray, as I learnt later, had prepared a speech which, with his usual vanity, (the author of *Vanity Fair*, alas, is himself infected with the vice he

¹ Sir Edward Creasy, a Victorian best-seller, the author of *Some Decisive Battles of the World from Marathon to Waterloo* etc.

The Crisis

has derided) he declared was a most excellent speech. But Thackeray had fallen ill before the dinner, and no other speaker could be found to take his place than this same Dr. Creasy, whose only claim to fame was that he had written a small book on the most famous battles, beginning with the battle of Marathon. Dr. Creasy rattled off his speech without a single stutter, no worse than any Frenchman—pompously, volubly, and fluently. I must confess that I did not like this manner of speaking, and the other listeners, too, remained unmoved! Then the most excellent Monckton Milnes proposed the toast of foreign literature, coupled with the name of Mérimée. Mérimée has a very refined and intelligent face, which always remains the same; he has the reputation of being an epicure and a sceptic, who never gets excited about anything, who does not believe in anything and who regards any expressions of enthusiasm with a slightly disdainful air. He is a senator and is in favour with the French Court. Yet this sceptic turned pale when the time came for him to reply to Milnes' courteous words in a brief speech (Mérimée's English is rather bad). His voice trembled and broke twice; apparently his vanity, too, can make him feel agitated, and even a senator does not like to be made to look a fool before a gathering of "free men". . . .

'When the names of the contributors to the literary fund were announced, I noticed that the idiotic marquess, the offspring of the Dukes of Bridgewater, gave only five pounds, so that even there he was no good—he was no Maecenas, and yet he was given the most important place next to Lord Palmerston! Still, it is only fair to say that the English Maecenases are not all like that; it is only in Russia that you will find people who represent an amusing, incredible, and yet actually existing mixture of Maecenas, Chichikov and Harpagon.

'So this dinner came to an end, and I left the hall with a feeling which never left me in England when I happened to come face to face with some expression of her public life. Yes, I said to myself, here too, as everywhere where this great people, full of imperfections though it is, has left the mark of its lion's claw—here, too, is strength, stability and good sense!'

It was at this dinner that Mérimée introduced Turgenev to Antonio Panizzi, the director of the British Museum. Turgenev left London for Paris on 20 May and three weeks later returned to

The Crisis

Russia, where, as he wrote to Herzen from Paris, 'reaction has again reared its head', the censorship, in particular, having grown stricter than ever. 'But', he added, 'do what they like, the stone has started rolling down the mountainside and nothing in the world can stop it now.'

There is a curious account of Turgenev's view of the situation in Russia in one of Prosper Mérimée's letters to the Empress Eugénie, written on 8 June 1858. According to Mérimée, Turgenev told him that he considered the Czar's decision to emancipate the serfs one of the boldest measures undertaken by the Russian government and that though the reform might have a favourable issue, it might also end in 'a terrible catastrophe'. It was quite possible, Mérimée quoted Turgenev as saying, that it would end in a revolution and that the peasants would hang all the landowners. 'Turgenev has a favourite gamekeeper', Mérimée wrote, 'whom he has good reason to believe is loyal to him. One day Turgenev asked him if in the event of a revolution he would join the peasants and would go out to kill him (Turgenev). The gamekeeper turned white and at last said in a trembling voice, "Of course, I'll join them!"'

Two years later, after the promulgation of the decree emancipating the serfs, Turgenev, who was in Paris at the time, kept delaying his return to Russia, and when Herzen scolded him for the delay, he pleaded that his daughter was keeping him there. But might not the fear that the peasants would rise in revolt against the landowners have induced him to wait till the danger had passed?

PART SEVEN

Three Momentous Years

2

The three years between 1858 and 1861 were the most productive and the stormiest years of Turgenev's life. During that time he wrote his three greatest novels—*A Nobleman's Nest*, *On the Eve* and *Fathers and Sons*—and was engaged in violent disputes with his closest friends and associates, ending in his break with the *Contemporary Review*, Goncharov and Tolstoy.

Turgenev returned to Russia in June 1858 and, after spending a few days in Petersburg, went straight to Spasskoye, where he stayed almost to the end of the year. He slipped easily into his routine of country life. He usually had one meal a day, eating only two rolls for breakfast and having tea—which he liked very strong—three or four times a day. He had no supper as a rule. Every morning and evening he took a tin mug and walked about a mile to a well at the far end of the park, the water of which he declared to be the best in the whole world. He and Fet saw each other very often, both at Spasskoye and at Novosyolki, the estate of Fet's brother-in-law, Ivan Borisov, to whom he became greatly attached. He often went shooting with Fet, invariably taking his medicine chest with him, for he regarded it, as Fet put it, as 'a talisman against cholera'. Fet was translating *Antony and Cleopatra* at the time, and Turgenev went carefully through the translation with him. One day, after dinner at Spasskoye, Turgenev asked Fet what he would do if Shakespeare were to enter the room suddenly. Fet was used to these unusual questions, and all he would say was that he would have tried to remember what Shakespeare looked

Three Momentous Years

like. 'And I', said Turgenev, 'would have fallen down at his feet and stayed there.'

Fet records a walking race with Turgenev at Novosyolki. Turgenev spoke disdainfully of the poet's slow 'cavalry-man's gait' and challenged him to walk ten times round the flower-beds, a distance of about a quarter of a mile. 'If', Turgenev said, 'each of us walks at his normal pace, I'm sure the fat cavalry man will soon lag behind me.' After they had been walking round the flower beds a few times, Turgenev began to gain on Fet, and on the last lap Fet was half a distance behind. This sort of thing pleased Turgenev hugely: he never lost his taste for child-like fun and that was why even as an old man he loved to romp about with children, whom he knew how to talk to and amuse.

Turgenev also visited Yasnaya Polyana a few times. He was very fond of Tolstoy's elder brother Nicholas, a man, he told a correspondent, of exquisite taste and fine sensibility. He was no longer attracted to Tolstoy's sister: he felt, he wrote to Countess Lambert, that he no longer had anything to say to her. As for Tolstoy himself, he just could not get on with him. 'We have been created poles apart', he wrote to Botkin. 'If I am eating soup and like it, I know for certain that Tolstoy will dislike it and vice versa.' In a letter to Goncharov he put it even more pungently. 'Tolstoy', he wrote, 'seems to think that I sneeze, drink and sleep for the sake of a phrase.'

Tolstoy's chief reason for suspecting Turgenev's sincerity seems to have been connected with the latter's enthusiasm for the impending agrarian reforms. Tolstoy, strangely enough when one remembers how much he did for the peasants in his old age, showed no particular enthusiasm for the emancipation of the serfs. Even when the manifesto emancipating the serfs was issued about two years later, he did not, in his own words 'manifest any selfless feelings in the matter'. He therefore could not but regard Turgenev's attempts to anticipate the reform by ceding almost half of his land to the peasants as leasehold property and cultivating his own land by hired agricultural labour, as a dangerous step from the point of view of the landowner's interests. He had always suspected Turgenev's democratic views; now that Turgenev was trying to put them to the test, he suspected them more than ever. For Turgenev

Three Momentous Years

was, after all, a very rich landowner and he could afford such an experiment, though he kept on complaining that it would cost him a lot of money. Like the majority of Russian landowners, Tolstoy preferred the old system according to which the serfs were obliged to cultivate the land of their masters for three days a week without pay. At the same time, Tolstoy must have felt at heart that fundamentally—so far as the human problem of the emancipation of the serfs was concerned—Turgenev was right and he was wrong, though for a whole-hogger like Tolstoy, it might have appeared odd that Turgenev did not go as far as his other democratic friends, such as Chernyshevsky, and demand that the land should be given to the peasants. Why did he part with only one half of his property, and that, too, for an annual rental which, reasonable as it was, the impoverished peasants would probably not be able to afford (as, indeed, the subsequent events showed). It was, then, this inner conflict between his humane feelings and his economic interests that exacerbated his feelings towards Turgenev, and not, as Nicholas Tolstoy laughingly suggested, Turgenev's resentment against Tolstoy for having freed himself from his literary tutelage.

That Tolstoy's views on the agrarian reforms were shared by most of the landowners of their district, Turgenev found out soon after his return to Spasskoye. He rushed off to a meeting of landowners at Oryol which was to elect a committee to consider the government's proposals for the emancipation of the serfs. 'The result of the election', he wrote to Prince Cherkassky, 'was bad: the nobility elected the most reactionary and bitter opponents of the reform. . . . We live in strange times. The opinions I heard expressed in Oryol and other places are far from comforting.'

A few months later he went to another meeting of landowners in Tula, where, he wrote to his daughter, he had engaged in violent disputes, talking and shouting, so that he returned to Spasskoye exhausted.

A rather sad event that happened shortly after his return to Spasskoye was the death of his famous bitch Diana. 'I cried at poor Diana's burial (in the park),' he wrote to Paulinette, 'and I confess it without blushing. It was a friend that passed away, and friends, whether two-legged or four-legged, are rare.' He grew no less attached to his next dog Bubul, a white pointer with yellowish ears.

Three Momentous Years

Bubul always slept on a little mattress in Turgenev's bedroom, covered with a flannel blanket. When the blanket slipped off at night, it would get up and prod Turgenev with its paw. 'Oh, what a spoilt dog you are,' Turgenev would mutter, meekly getting up and covering the dog with its blanket. Tolstoy often made fun of Turgenev for his strange attachment to Bubul. But Turgenev took it in good part, for Bubul was a present from Pauline Viardot.

2

Turgenev's main occupation during the summer and autumn of 1858 was the writing of his second novel—*A Nobleman's Nest*.¹ 'I first planned it', he wrote on the manuscript of the novel, 'in 1856, but did not begin writing it for a long time, turning it over in my head; I began working on it in the summer of 1858 in Spasskoye. I finished it on Monday, 27 October 1858, in Spasskoye.' On 30 July he wrote to Pauline Viardot that he was busy writing his novel. 'This time', he declared, 'I have been thinking it over very carefully and I hope to avoid any hasty and unexpected endings which so justly troubled you. [A reference to the rather laboured ending of *Rudin*.] I feel in the mood for work, but I no longer feel the fervour of youth; I write with quite amazing composure; I only hope it does not show in my novel. For coldness is already mediocrity.' It was a very hot autumn and the shooting season was spoilt because of the drought. 'The sky', he wrote to Nekrasov, 'is still coppery—we have not had a single drop of rain for days—dust everywhere—not *one* woodcock anywhere, and not one double-snipe, either.' Baulked of his favourite sport, he sat down to his novel with a will and finished it earlier than he expected. At the beginning of December he was back in Petersburg with the manuscript of *A Nobleman's Nest*. He had caught a bad cold, which developed into bronchitis and robbed him of his voice. On Saturday, 28 December, and Sunday, 29 December 1858 (O.S.), the novel was read in his drawing room by Annenkov to a number of friends, including Nekrasov, Druzhinin, and Professor Nikitenko. It was published in the January number of the *Contemporary Review*

¹ Turgenev used the word 'nest' in the sense of a country-seat, the title of the novel should really be translated as *A Gentleman's Home*.

Three Momentous Years

and became an instantaneous success. '*A Nobleman's Nest*', Turgenev wrote, 'had the greatest success that ever fell to my lot.' He was lionised as no other writer has been lionised before or since. 'All sorts of celebrities', Annenkov writes, 'including people of the highest rank, sought introductions to him. He became the favourite of the fair sex, and society women flung open their drawing rooms to him. . . . Every evening he would put on evening dress and appear at their parties and receptions where he charmed them by the elegance of his French, the brilliant exposition of his opinions, by his witty stories and his extremely handsome figure.' Turgenev, who was highly susceptible to the charms of the 'fair sex', no doubt enjoyed his brief popularity (for brief, alas, it was).

It is not difficult to see why *A Nobleman's Nest* proved so popular with everybody. Professor Nikitenko summed up the general attitude in a few sentences. 'He [Turgenev] has written his novel', he wrote in his diary, 'entirely as a work of art. That is excellent. It is time a stop was put to literature only as a case-book record and as a scourge of public morals.' In the introduction to the edition of his novels published in 1880, Turgenev wrote: 'The author of *Rudin*, written in 1855, and the author of *Virgin Soil*, written in 1876, are one and the same person. During the whole of that time I tried, as much as I could, impartially and conscientiously to depict and embody into proper types both what Shakespeare calls "the body and pressure of time"¹ and the swiftly changing physiognomy of the Russians of the educated classes who were mostly the object of my observations.' In *A Nobleman's Nest* these two chief aims of Turgenev do not obtrude themselves as much as in his other novels with the result that the attention of the contemporary reader was concentrated entirely on the masterly delineation of its characters and he could appreciate its wonderful lyrical undertones, its human tragedy as well as its humour without his beliefs or feelings being unduly hurt or provoked.

The subdued, tender, bitter-sweet melancholy which pervades the novel and lends it its great charm is a true expression of Turgenev's mood. The biographical elements in it are quite unmistak-

¹ The quotation is from *Hamlet* III, ii, 27: '. . . to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.'

Three Momentous Years

able. Like Turgenev himself, Lavretsky goes to Italy after the discovery of his wife's unfaithfulness. Like Turgenev, too, he hoped 'to become a father within a few months' at the time of the discovery and was not sure whether the child was his or not. Lavretsky, too, could not understand how his wife (like Pauline Viardot in real life), 'knowing that she was unfaithful, could remain, as before, so calm, so tender, and so confiding with him.' Lavretsky's whole life, Turgenev writes, was *poisoned*.

At the end of the novel the personal note is again sounded clearly and unmistakably. Lavretsky, like Turgenev, had gone through a crisis in life, 'a crisis', Turgenev writes, 'which many people do not experience, but without which one can never remain a decent person to the end; he really stopped thinking of his personal happiness. . . . He calmed down and—why hide the truth?—aged not only in face and body—his soul, too, had grown old; to keep one's heart young till old age,' Turgenev goes on, speaking surely for himself as well as for his hero, 'is difficult and almost ridiculous; it is enough not to have lost one's faith in goodness and to have preserved one's steadfastness and one's desire for an active life.' Again, it is not so much Lavretsky as Turgenev himself who utters the last sentence in the novel: 'Welcome, lonely old age! Draw to a close, useless life!'

3

Those were certainly Turgenev's feelings when he wrote the last lines of *A Nobleman's Nest* in October 1858. His break with Pauline Viardot seemed complete. On his return to Spasskoye in July, it is true, he received a letter from her in which she told him of Ary Scheffer's sudden death. He replied at once. 'I feel deeply the great sorrow which this loss must have caused you,' he wrote. 'He loved you well! . . . When death strikes in our ranks, the friends who remain must draw closer to one another. . . . It is the hand of a friend that I hold out to you; it is a deeply devoted heart which asks you to count on it as on the one which has ceased to beat.' But he did not receive any reply, for a week later he wrote to his daughter asking her to let him know when Pauline Viardot would be back in Paris and how she was. On 21 July, he wrote to Pauline Viardot again to tell her of the death of the painter Ivanov of

Three Momentous Years

cholera in Petersburg shortly after his return from Italy with his picture of the Epiphany. The picture, he thought, belonged to the period of decadence: 'it is no longer a painting pure and simple—it is philosophy, poetry, history, religion.' A week later he wrote to tell her of his life at Spasskoye, his new arrangement with his peasants, the new novel he was writing. But once more he most probably got no reply, for he did not write to her again until shortly before his departure for France in April 1859.

In the meantime his relations with his daughter were becoming strained because of her growing hostility towards Pauline Viardot. 'Who gave you the right to say that Madame Viardot dislikes you?' he wrote to Paulinette in October 1858. 'Don't you think it is ungrateful of you to suspect her of such feelings, she who always treated you like a mother?' In January 1859, he accused her of being too touchy and suspicious. 'I read with regret,' he wrote, 'that you have offended Madame Viardot—she has been so good to you that you owe her obedience and submission in everything.' Paulinette was the only link he had with Pauline Viardot, and he did not want it to be broken. 'Tell Mme Viardot', he wrote to his daughter in the same letter, 'that I am waiting impatiently for her to write to me what she is doing in Paris. . . .'

In Petersburg, he tried again to keep a mistress, but at forty-one the physical side of love began to pall on him. 'Alexandra Petrovna', he confided to Botkin, 'has completely exhausted me. . . . At our age, three times a month is enough.' His friendship with Countess Lambert, on the other hand, was getting closer, too close, perhaps, at times, for a mere *amitié amoureuse*. He was seeing her almost every day. 'I know few places in the world', he wrote to her in April 1859, on his way to Paris, 'where I feel as happy as in your little room. Many memories of quiet evenings and good conversations are connected with it in my mind. Do you remember how you cried once? It was not your tears which moved me as the fact that you were not ashamed to cry. . . .' A month earlier, on his return to Spasskoye, he dropped her what sounds like a hint (she felt more strongly attracted to him than he to her): 'I have come to the conclusion that every person must treat himself sternly and even coarsely and mistrustfully. It is difficult to tame the beast in oneself.'

Three Momentous Years

On Easter Sunday he went to church. His shoulders ached from the heavy fur coat he was wearing and as the memories of his childhood came back to him he felt deeply moved and sad. After the service he took a walk round the park. It was a beautiful day—hot and very quiet. The birds were singing and the air was full of the fragrance of spring. He nearly cried. 'My life', he wrote to Botkin on the same day (24 April), 'has been spilt to the last drop, but the smell of a glass that has just been emptied is stronger than when it is still full. *Addio vita* I once heard a young woman's voice singing on the Corso during a carnival—and for a long time the sound of these words resounded in my ears.'

It is in this resigned mood that he left for France at the end of April. And yet he still hoped. 'I can't help feeling', he wrote to Countess Lambert, 'that something new has begun in my life. Or does it only seem so, and life can no longer offer anything new and unexpected to me except death? The feeling of sadness at a change of life, at a parting, is a youthful feeling and is closely connected with the feeling of hope for the future. These two differently coloured flowers grow on the same stalk; have they withered in me? I don't know, but sometimes I feel frightened. . . . But then that, too, is a sign of youth. . . .'

He travelled to Paris with the Ukrainian short-story writer Maria Markevich and her little son, who sat on his knees most of the journey. Maria Markevich was a great friend of the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, whom Turgenev had met for the first time a month earlier. (A volume of her short stories translated by Turgenev was published under her pseudonym of Marko Vovchok in March 1859.) He stayed only one week in Paris, leaving for Vichy without seeing Pauline Viardot. Paulinette kept dropping dark hints about the opera singer, but she did not dare to speak her mind openly. '*Papa*,' she used to say, '*j'ai quelque chose à te dire*', and immediately changed her mind: '*Non, je ne le dirai pas!*' She plucked up courage to write to him, however, though even then she must have done it in a roundabout way. But even a veiled hint was enough. 'But to talk to you *seriously*, as you say,' Turgenev wrote to her from Vichy, 'I am very displeased with the rest of your letter. You refer in it to Mme Viardot in a way that I cannot admit nor permit. You forget a little too soon what you owe to her. Please understand

Three Momentous Years

that you can never make me feel antagonistic towards her. . . . So, my dear child, no more of this, no more of your advice to me not to go to Courtavenel: I shall go there and, indeed, it is very probable that we shall both spend our holidays there.' But this time Paulinette put her foot down ('She is very strongminded', Turgenev wrote to Countess Lambert, 'and possesses a great deal of perspicacity and a gift for silent observation.')—she did not go to Courtavenel. Turgenev himself spent about six weeks there. 'Turgenev, the friend I told you about,' Pauline Viardot wrote primly to the German conductor Julius Rietz, one of her lovers, in July, from Courtavenel, 'is still with us. He belongs to the few people I call friends. . . . We read a great deal together, usually, that is. We began Homer only yesterday. . . . I know of nothing better', she concluded, 'than to read aloud a good book with a sympathetic spirit, a dear friend. . . .' Meanwhile her 'dear friend' was writing desperate letters from Courtavenel to Countess Lambert. 'Why am I here,' he wrote, 'and why when I am already turning away from everything that is dear to me do I cast my eyes back? You will easily understand what I want to say, and my position here.' This time, however, his spirit was no longer in agony. 'They say', he wrote to Countess Lambert, 'that a man dies several times before his death. I know what has died in me; why then stand looking at an open coffin? No, not my feeling has died in me, but the possibility of its realisation. I look upon *my* happiness as I look upon *my* youth, as on the youth and the happiness of a stranger. I am here, and all that is there, and between this *here* and that *there*, lies a gulf that no eternity can bridge.' What then was there left for him to do? Only one thing: to carry on as best he could and, having found a sympathetic and dear friend like Countess Lambert, who, like him, did not expect much from life, 'to hold her hand firmly and swim together till—' That, Turgenev concluded, was the confession of a man 'who, alas, is no "siren", no "tiger" and no "white bear", but just an old man who has not yet forgotten how to love and who loves you very much.' A few weeks later he reverted to the same dismal theme. 'Life', he wrote to Countess Lambert on 4 August from Bellefontaine, where he was staying as the guest of Princess Trubetskoy, 'is nothing but a disease, which sometimes grows stronger and sometimes weaker; one ought to learn how to endure

Three Momentous Years

its attacks. . . . The difference between this disease and others is that the best physician for it is another patient, especially a friend. We have often helped each other in our ailments in your little room, and I always think of it when feeling depressed.'

From Bellefontaine he went to Paris, but had to take refuge in Courtavenel again to escape the grand military review given by Louis Napoleon after the Franco-Italian campaign. 'Every military triumph *ist mir in Grauel* [horrifies me],' he wrote to Annenkov from Courtavenel on 13 August. 'Much better sit in front of an open window and gaze into a motionless garden, slowly mingling the images of my imagination with the memories of my distant friends. It is fresh and quiet in my room, from the passage I can hear the voices of the children and from above the sounds of Gluck's music. . . . What more do I want?'

He returned to Spasskoye in September. 'I did well to return to my old home,' he wrote to Countess Lambert. 'But at the same time I cannot help feeling sad, and my old attachments have awakened in me more strongly than ever.' And to make quite sure that the Countess did not misunderstand him, he added: 'There are only two people in the world I love more than you: one because she is my daughter, and the other because—you know why.'

The autumn shooting was again spoilt by a drought, but he did not feel particularly upset, for he was very hard at work. He was finishing *On the Eve*.

4

The genesis of the novel is a curious one. At the outbreak of the Crimean War Turgenev struck up a friendship with one of his neighbours, a young man of 25. His name was Vassily Karatayev. He was, according to Turgenev, a romantic, an enthusiast, a great lover of music and literature—sensitive, straightforward and amorous. He was unpopular with the landowners of the district who regarded him as a freethinker and who disliked his caustic tongue. They were afraid of introducing him to their daughters because of his reputation as a ladies' man. To get rid of him, they chose him as the officer commanding the local levy. One day he arrived at Spasskoye looking very harassed. He told Turgenev that

Three" Momentous Years

as he did not expect to return alive from the war, he would like him to have the manuscript of a story he had written. The story concerned a love affair he had had while a student in Moscow with a girl who afterwards left him for a Bulgarian patriot by the name of Katranov. She went to Bulgaria with him, where he soon died of consumption. Karatayev wanted Turgenev to do something with the story as he realised that he himself had not enough talent to write it and he did not want it to perish as he believed he would perish. 'This love story', Turgenev writes in the introduction to the 1880 edition of his works, 'was told with sincerity, though unskilfully. Only one scene, the outing to Tsaritsyno [a little town near Moscow] was sketched in rather vividly—and in my novel I preserved its main features. At the time, it is true, I was getting ready to write *Rudin*, but the idea I later tried to express in *On the Eve* occasionally occurred to me. The figure of the heroine Yelena, in those days still a new type in Russian life, was outlined quite clearly in my mind; but I lacked the hero, a person Yelena could give herself to in her still vague, though powerful, craving for freedom. After reading Karatayev's story, I exclaimed involuntarily: "Here is the hero I was looking for!" There was not such a man to be found among Russians at that time.'

Turgenev goes on to claim that Karatayev had actually died in the Crimea of typhoid fever, and that on his return to Spasskoye in the winter of 1858-59 he remembered Karatayev's manuscript and, having read it again, sat down to write his novel. Here Turgenev's memory has played him false. Actually, as becomes clear from his letters to Countess Lambert of 27 March and to Pauline Viardot of 12 April 1859, Karatayev did not die in the Crimea during the war, but on his estate in the spring of 1859. It was his death that sent Turgenev back to the forgotten manuscript. In fact, on the very day he wrote to Countess Lambert about Karatayev's death, he also told her that he was busy preparing the plan of his new novel. 'It is very fatiguing work,' he wrote, 'particularly as it leaves no *visible* traces behind it: you lie on the sofa turning some character and situation over in your mind, then you suddenly realise that three or four hours have passed and you don't seem to have anything to show for it. To tell the truth,' he concludes, 'there are very few pleasures in our trade. And quite right, too: everybody, even

Three Momentous Years

artists, even scholars, must live by the sweat of their faces. And if their faces do not sweat, all the worse for them: for then their hearts are either aching or drying up.'

He began working on the novel in Vichy. 'I am now busy writing a novel in which I shall put everything that still remains in my heart,' he told Countess Lambert in July. 'Goodness only knows if I shall succeed. I am constantly preoccupied with my characters. I even see them in my dreams. If I am satisfied with my work, I shall dedicate it to you.' He finished it at Spasskoye, on 6 November. 'The basic idea of my novel,' he wrote to Ivan Aksakov, the younger son of Sergey Aksakov, who had died earlier in the year, 'is the need for *consciously* heroic natures in order that things should move forward.' He called it *On the Eve* because it was written on the eve of the emancipation of the serfs. But its title carried the further implication that the emancipation of the serfs was only the beginning of the entire reorganisation of the political and economic life of the country whose whole future depended on the emergence of these 'consciously heroic natures'. It was this implication that at once aroused the alarm and hostility of the Russian ruling class. 'The upper strata of Russian society', Annenkov writes, 'were alarmed by Turgenev's novel. They were waiting quietly and without any excitement for the coming reform, which in their opinion could not seriously affect their position, and they were horrified by the frame of mind of its author who had raised the terrible questions of the rights of a people and the loyalty of a fighting opposition. A favourite saying among them was: 'This *On the Eve* will never have a "tomorrow".'

Turgenev himself became aware of the hornet's nest he had aroused by his novel when he sent it to Countess Lambert for her criticism in December (he could not read it to her himself because he had again fallen ill with bronchitis on his arrival in Petersburg and had lost his voice).

'A most extraordinary thing has happened to me just now,' Turgenev wrote to Annenkov on 15 December. 'Countess Lambert and her husband have just been to see me and (having read my novel) she proved to me so incontrovertibly that it is no good and false from beginning to end that I am seriously thinking of throwing it into the fire. Please, don't laugh but come along to my place at

Three Momentous Years

three o'clock and I'll show you the observations she has written down and tell you her arguments. She has without any exaggeration filled me with disgust for my work and—without joking—it was only because of my respect for you and my faith in your taste that I did not destroy my novel at once. . . . I'm waiting for you and keeping the fire in the grate burning.'

Annenkov did not find it difficult to prove to Turgenev that, as he put it, Countess Lambert condemned the novel because she thought that political problems ought not to be discussed in a work of art. *On the Eve* was published in 1860 in the January and February issues of the *Russian Herald*, edited by the reactionary publicist Mikhail Katkov, who, Turgenev was to disclose later, was one of the only three men he ever despised in his life. (The other two were the founder of the French popular press Emile de Girardin, and Faddey Bulgarin, editor of the *Northern Bee*, one of the chief supporters of the régime of Nicholas I in the Russian press.)

Turgenev's refusal to publish his novel in the *Contemporary Review* is the first visible sign of a breach between him and Nekrasov, which was soon to develop into open enmity.

It was in January 1860 that Turgenev began writing his autobiographical story *First Love*. He finished it on 22 March 'at three o'clock in the morning' as he noted down on the manuscript. He dedicated it to Annenkov and it was published in Druzhinin's monthly, *Library for Reading*.

5

In spite of Turgenev's subsequent denials, it was a review of *On the Eve* in the *Contemporary Review* which brought to a head the fundamental differences of opinion between him and its editors. The review was written by Nicholas Dobrolyubov, who was only twenty-three when Turgenev first met him on his return to Russia in the summer of 1858. There could be no doubt that Dobrolyubov represented a new force in the intellectual life of the country, a force that regarded the aristocratic set of writers to which Turgenev belonged with open hostility and contempt. Like Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov was the son of a priest. He joined the staff of the *Contemporary Review* in 1857 and soon became its leading literary

Three Momentous Years

critic. His integrity was as unquestionable as the brilliance of his critical powers. 'A literary Robespierre', Turgenev is said to have called him. But though opposed to his views, Turgenev undoubtedly admired him. 'I am sorry to hear of Dobrolyubov's death', he wrote to Borisov on 23 December 1861, 'though I did not share his views: he was a very gifted man—and so young, too. What a waste of strength!' And ten years later he wrote: 'I esteemed Dobrolyubov greatly, both as a man and as a talented writer'. But esteeming and admiring a man is one thing and putting up with his contemptuous treatment another. From the very first day of their meeting Dobrolyubov pointedly ignored Turgenev. When Chernyshevsky tried to convince him that writers like Turgenev who were, as he put it, 'more or less capable of sympathising with something that is not dishonest' ought not to be antagonised, Dobrolyubov replied that so far as he was concerned such allies were no allies. One day Turgenev invited him to one of his weekly literary dinners. Dobrolyubov just smiled and turned away. Turgenev, remembering the heated discussions he had had with Belinsky, tried to engage Dobrolyubov in conversation. 'Ivan Sergeyevich,' said Dobrolyubov, 'your talk bores me and if you don't mind we'd better stop talking to one another altogether.' Having said that, he calmly got up and walked over to the other end of Nekrasov's study. Turgenev would have been more than human if he had not resented such snubs. It was clear to him that he was no longer wanted in the new 'circle' of the *Contemporary Review* and it is not surprising that he took *On the Eve* to Katkov.

Dobrolyubov published his review of *On the Eve* under the challenging title: *When will the Real Day Come?* The title summed up the idea of the novel fairly enough, though Turgenev would not have put the same construction on it as Dobrolyubov. In his article *Concerning 'Fathers and Sons'*, published in 1868, Turgenev declared that Dobrolyubov's review was full of 'the warmest and—to be candid—the most undeserved eulogies'. And so it was—up to a point. Dobrolyubov paid a tribute to Turgenev for his 'living attitude to contemporary life' which, he argued, was responsible for his constant success with the reading public. But he went on to claim that there was no longer any need for 'men who raise us above the reality that surrounds us' but for 'men who raise, or teach us to

Three Momentous Years

raise, reality itself to the reasonable demands which we have already created'. In other words, what Dobrolyubov suggested was that they wanted men of action like Chernyshevsky, who was one of the leaders of the underground revolutionary movement, and not men like Turgenev who indulged in 'abstract and always a little epicurean arguments'. Dobrolyubov did not deny that Turgenev tried to march along with the progressive movement of the time. He thought, however, that, judging by his previous works, he was not able to write 'a real heroic epic'. His business was of quite a different kind: 'Of all the Iliad and the Odyssey, he appropriates only the story of Odysseus's sojourn on Calypso's island, and further than that he does not go.' The 'heroic epic' Dobrolyubov had in mind was written a few years later by Chernyshevsky under the title *What's to be Done?* 'His [Chernyshevsky's] manner', Turgenev wrote, 'arouses in me a feeling of physical disgust. If this is—I won't say art or beauty—but intelligence and the sort of thing a novelist ought to do, then all that is left for a man like me is to hide himself away in some dark corner.'

Turgenev could hardly have said anything else. For to have accepted Dobrolyubov's thesis would have meant to be false to life as he saw it with the eye of a creative artist as well as to his own particular method of proceeding from character to idea and not vice versa.

Before Dobrolyubov's review with its veiled metaphorical statements was published, the censor showed it to Turgenev, who at once went to Nekrasov and demanded that it should be rewritten as he considered it 'too harsh and unjust'. He had of course no right to demand that, as no doubt Nekrasov must have pointed out to him. It is quite possible that, as Mrs. Panayev records, in the heat of the argument Turgenev told Nekrasov that he should choose between him and Dobrolyubov. If he did present Nekrasov with such an ultimatum, he did not do it, as Chernyshevsky alleges, because his vanity was hurt, but because he could not possibly go on working for a journal that stood for a principle of aesthetics he considered utterly false and detrimental to art. Chernyshevsky was quite right when he later claimed that Turgenev left the *Contemporary Review* because 'our way of thinking has become so clear to him that he can no longer approve of it'. But the actual break with the *Contem-*

Three Momentous Years

porary Review did not occur because of Dobrolyubov's article. It was Chernyshevsky's review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Wonder Book* that was responsible for bringing it about. 'If he [Panayev] wants to know why I no longer wish to be associated with the *Contemporary Review*,' Turgenev wrote to Annenkov on 12 October 1860, 'let him look up the passage in the June number in which Mr. Dobrolyubov¹ accuses me of deliberately caricaturing Rudin to please my *rich* literary friends in whose eyes a poor man is a scoundrel. This is too much—and no honest man can be expected to work for such a journal.'

Why did Chernyshevsky insert such a passage in the review of a book that had nothing whatever to do either with Turgenev or with Bakunin, whom Turgenev was accused of caricaturing as Rudin? The answer is obvious. Realising that they could no longer count on Turgenev as one of their contributors, the editors of the *Contemporary Review* did not hesitate to impugn his character as a writer in order to persuade their readers that his loss was of no importance. At first they ignored Turgenev's demand that his name should be removed from the list of contributors. Instead they put it at the end of the list and only some time later announced that no more contributions from him would be published. This announcement was followed by an open attack in *The Whistle*, the comic supplement of the *Contemporary Review* edited by Dobrolyubov, in which Turgenev was lampooned as 'a fashionable novelist who is trailing in the wake of a singer and arranging ovations for her at provincial theatres abroad'.

'The *Contemporary Review*' Turgenev wrote to Dostoevsky on 3 October 1861, 'abuses me and tells deliberate lies. I have a letter from Nekrasov, written at the beginning of this year, in which he makes the most tempting offers to me. I replied that I refused to be a contributor of the *Review*, so now of course they feel obliged to say that it was they who chucked me out. All this is too trivial to deserve any attention. It will remain trivial even if Dobrolyubov finally succeeds in finishing me off. For what do I amount to? And what for that matter does anyone?'

The quarrel had by then become one of the greatest literary sen-

¹ Turgenev mistakenly assumed that the review of the *Wonder Book* was written by Dobrolyubov.

Three Momentous Years

sations of the day. Saltykov-Shchedrin and Dostoevsky joined in the fray, Dostoevsky writing two articles in defence of Turgenev. When the dust of the battle cleared, Turgenev was the only person who bore no grudge against his detractors, as is shown by his reference to Dobrolyubov's review and by the many sympathetic references to Chernyshevsky in his correspondence.

6

On the Eve was undoubtedly responsible for the unfortunate quarrel between Turgenev and Goncharov. Six years older than Turgenev, Goncharov had a very hard life. An undistinguished civil servant, then a censor, fame came to him late. He wrote only three novels and he took a very long time over each of them. When he published his first novel, Turgenev was an indifferent poet and a rather eccentric man-about-town. In 1858 Turgenev became the most talked of writer in Russia and his incursion into the novel seemed an unpardonable offence to Goncharov: the rich and brilliant aristocrat should, in his opinion, have gone on writing his clever short stories. The *novella* and not the novel was obviously his particular field. And yet he could not help cultivating Turgenev's friendship and discussing with him his own literary plans. He picked up many useful hints from Turgenev, but Turgenev, too, had in his opinion more than profited from his company; for he had been stupid enough to discuss the plan of his vast third novel with him, and Turgenev, the 'cunning diplomat', had, he believed, picked his brains while pretending to be his best friend. Towards the end of his life it became clear that Goncharov was suffering from paranoiac delusions. He accused Turgenev of stealing his manuscripts, of being the leading spirit among his enemies and of hiring spies to watch him. 'Everybody is laughing at me,' he wrote to Turgenev as early as 1868, 'and you among them.' The symptoms of his mental illness appeared for the first time in 1859 when he accused Turgenev of having stolen the theme of his last novel, *The Precipice* (published ten years later) for *A Nobleman's Nest*. One scene especially in Turgenev's novel, he thought, was very similar to a scene in his own novel which he had read to Turgenev and to other literary friends of his. Turgenev was unwise enough to agree

Three Momentous Years

to cut out this scene (between Lisa and Marfa Timofeyevna), thus merely confirming Goncharov's suspicions. The great success of *A Nobleman's Nest* made Goncharov look on Turgenev as crowned with the laurels that rightly should have been his. In a letter to Turgenev on 28 March 1859, he hinted darkly that he would not be surprised if Turgenev did not make use of some more of his material for his new novel. Turgenev replied that he did not feel much pleasure in writing to a man who considered him 'an appropriator of other people's ideas, a liar and a blabber.' Goncharov referred to Turgenev (in a letter to Annenkov) as 'a charming traitor'. On 22 January 1860, Turgenev read his essay on *Hamlet and Don Quixote* (published in the January number of the *Contemporary Review*) to a meeting in aid of the Russian Literary Fund.¹ A month later Goncharov read an extract from *The Precipice* to a similar meeting. The same month the last part of *On the Eve* was published in the *Russian Herald*. Both by his novel and at the public meeting Turgenev completely eclipsed Goncharov. But when Goncharov read Turgenev's last novel his worst suspicions seemed to have been confirmed: Turgenev had had the effrontery to introduce an artist in his novel! It was quite obvious that he must have got the idea from *The Precipice*, the hero of which was also an artist. What must have irked Goncharov was to realise that Shubin in *On the Eve* was a much more brilliant character than his own Raysky. He at once dashed off a letter to Turgenev. 'I am glad', he wrote with unconcealed sarcasm, 'to recognise in you a bold and colossal artist. But also as a man I cannot help admiring one particularly noble trait in your character, namely the genial, condescending and attentive way with which you recently listened to and praised the worthless extract from my novel, which, as a matter of fact, I discussed with you many years ago.'

If Goncharov had confined himself to his letter, Turgenev might have overlooked his innuendoes. But he did more. He began talking wildly to his friends about the shameless way in which Turgenev had misappropriated the themes and the characters from his novel.

¹ 'Your father', Turgenev wrote to Paulinette on 23 January, 'was applauded furiously, which made him look silly and mumble I don't know what in acknowledgment. We collected 1,200 roubles, making a total of 7,000 roubles for our Fund.' (Turgenev repeated his public lecture in Moscow a few weeks later and collected another 1,200 roubles for the Literary Fund).

Three Momentous Years

When one of his friends told him of a dinner Turgenev was giving, he remarked that he supposed Turgenev did not mind spending his (Goncharov's) money. Soon Petersburg was full of rumours that Turgenev's last two novels were plagiarised from Goncharov's unpublished masterpiece.

Turgenev was left with no option but to demand that the whole matter should be put before an arbitration court. But Goncharov, an old and experienced civil servant, conducted his case very cleverly. He was careful not to accuse Turgenev in writing of plagiarism, insisting that all he had said was that there was an 'external' similarity between his novel and Turgenev's novels and that since there could be no question of libel, all the arbitration court could be asked to decide was whether such a similarity existed and whether, if it did exist, that might not be held to interfere with his work on the novel.

The court, consisting of three writers, including Annenkov and Druzhinin, met at Goncharov's flat on 29 March 1860 (O. S.). It was decided that since in their novels both Turgenev and Goncharov dealt with the same social environment, the situations described in them must needs have certain common similarities and that the same was true of any coincidental similarities between their themes and ideas.

Goncharov at once declared that he was completely satisfied with the court's findings. But Turgenev saw that the court had not really vindicated him. He went terribly pale, and falling back in his arm-chair, said in a voice shaking with suppressed emotion (according to Annenkov, who declared that he had never seen him so excited): 'My business with you, Ivan Alexandrovich [Goncharov], is finished: but I should like, if I may, to say this: our friendly relations are at an end from this moment. What has just happened between us has clearly shown the dangerous results that may follow friendly exchanges of ideas and the ordinary intercourse of people who trust each other. I remain an admirer of your talent and I daresay I shall have many more opportunities of admiring it together with others, but there can be no question of any resumption of our former friendly relations or of any frank exchanges of ideas between us.' And with a nod to his friends, he left the room.

The break between Turgenev and Goncharov continued for

Three Momentous Years

four years (they made up their quarrel at the funeral of Druzhinin), but they never really became friends again.

7

About a year after his quarrel with Goncharov came Turgenev's famous quarrel with Tolstoy which nearly ended in a duel and which lasted seventeen years. During that year, that is, between May 1860 and May 1861, Turgenev had been to France, stayed seven weeks at Soden, a German spa near Coblenz, and a few weeks on the Isle of Wight. At Soden he spent his time very pleasantly in the company of a young and pretty German girl, who lived with her mother in the same boarding house as he, and with Nicholas Tolstoy, who had developed tuberculosis (he died in the South of France a few months later) and with whom he spent hours at the chessboard. In Soden, too, he bought another of his famous gun-dogs, a black pointer of mixed English and German breed, which answered to the name of Flambeau. From Soden he travelled to Ems for a day to see Countess Lambert, and to Mainz for a meeting with Maria Markevich, with whom he was very friendly at the time. (The Ukrainian lady writer's extraordinary genius for borrowing money eventually put an end to their friendship.) He then travelled down the Rhine to Bonn and returned to France via Aachen. He was in London at the beginning of August and on the Isle of Wight (where he shared a cottage with Annenkov in Ventnor) from 12 August to 4 September. It was on the Isle of Wight that he drew up his grandiose scheme for introducing elementary education in Russia, a scheme that shared the fate of all his other schemes for the improvement of the lot of the illiterate and ill-used peasants.

In London he engaged an elderly English governess for his daughter. Paulinette, who was eighteen at the time, was getting very awkward about Pauline Viardot and Turgenev's frequent adjurations had little effect on her. As he was quite determined not to let her go back to Russia (he refused her mother's request to see her on the ground that such a meeting would only make them unhappy) but to marry her to a Frenchman, he had to get someone to live with her while he was away. He engaged a Mrs. Innis, an Anglo-Catholic, who struck him as a very gentle person with 'disting-

Three Momentous Years

guished manners'. What worried him was her piety. 'The only thing I am afraid of', he wrote to Paulinette, 'is that her piety may prove a little too severe on the natural gaiety of youth.' Little did he dream that this pious and typically Victorian woman would be the direct cause of his violent quarrel with Tolstoy.

He visited Courtavenel twice during 1860—in July and September. In July Paul fell dangerously ill and it was Pauline Viardot herself who summoned him to the bedside of her little son, whom she might well have thought to be his son, too. 'I am now in the house where I arrived for the first time fifteen years ago,' Turgenev wrote to Maria Markevich from Courtavenel on 21 July. 'A great deal of my life has been left here. I can remember how fast my heart used to beat and how my breath used to fail me whenever I caught sight of it from a distance. But now all this has grown much quieter—and high time too! I shall stay here only ten days. (These last three words already show how different everything has become!)' During his September visit to Courtavenel Pauline Viardot was away in Ireland, but he met her later in Paris. 'A sort of a sad mist', he told Countess Lambert, had fallen over his relations with Pauline Viardot. 'My heart', he confided to her in December, 'died the other day. I'm telling you this as a fact—you understand what I want to say. My past has become completely separated from me, but having taken leave of it, I realised that I had nothing left, that my life, too, has become separated from me. I felt awful, but soon I seem to have been turned into stone. And now I feel that it is still possible to live like that. But should the faintest hope revive in my heart, it would shake me to the very foundation. I have already experienced this feeling of numbness beneath which mute sorrow lies concealed. Let the crust harden and the sorrow beneath it will disappear.'

Viardot had by then lost her voice. Already at the end of 1859 Botkin, who was present in Paris at her performance of Orpheus in Gluck's opera, wrote to Fet that she acted excellently in the part, but sang badly because she had no voice. And yet in spite of what must have been such a tragic blow to her, she refused Turgenev's friendship—seemingly on any terms. 'I just go on existing,' Turgenev wrote to Countess Lambert on 20 January 1861, 'and that is all. All my other bonds have not so much been broken as dissolved into thin air. I feel as though I had died a long time ago, as though I

Three Momentous Years

belonged to some dead man, but one who has still preserved his love for Goodness and Beauty. But there is no longer anything personal in that love, and looking at some beautiful woman, I no longer think to myself of any possible relationship between me and that woman, just as if I were a contemporary of Sesostris, who by some miracle still walks the earth among the living. The possibility of experiencing one's own death in oneself is the most incontrovertible proof there is of the immortality of the soul. Here I am dead, and yet I am still alive and have perhaps even become better and purer. What more do I want?'

This seemingly final break with Pauline Viardot drew him closer to Countess Lambert. Again and again in his letters he assured her that he loved her. Writing to her from Spasskoye in May 1861, he declared that his feelings towards her had grown stronger, though perhaps a little blunter, too. But that was inevitable. 'The bark on a six-year-old tree', he wrote, 'is coarser than on a young sapling, but all the more durable for that.' And when Countess Lambert's only son died he wrote to her in December 1860, from Paris: 'If I had been in Petersburg, I should have wept with you; but now I can only hold out my hands to you and press yours in silence. . . . He who has religion', he concluded, 'has everything and cannot lose anything; but he who has not got it, has nothing, and I feel it all the stronger as I myself belong to those who have not got it.' A few days later he wrote to her again: 'The naturalness of death is more terrible than its unusualness and suddenness. Religion alone can conquer this fear. But religion must first become a natural need, and he who has not got it must avert his eyes thoughtlessly or stoically (it is really the same thing). . . . Is death really nothing more than the extinction of life?' He went on musing on a subject that was to occupy him incessantly for the last twenty years of his life. 'I simply do not know what to think, except to say again, Happy are those who believe.' He was beginning to feel as though he were being covered by a hard crust: inside him everything was still quite soft, but the fibres with which he came into contact with life had hardened. 'I am slowly preparing myself for the inevitable end,' he wrote to Countess Lambert two months after his forty-third birthday.

8

In February 1861 Tolstoy passed through Paris from Italy where he had spent two months after his brother's death in the South of France. 'His brother's death', Turgenev wrote to Annenkov on 15 February, 'has had a great effect on him. Though still rather eccentric, he is more chastened and more gentle. He read to me some extracts from his new literary works, from which I could conclude that his talent had not by any means been frittered away and that he still had a great future.' Three days later he wrote to Countess Lambert: 'I have not seen Tolstoy for a long time and I found a change in him for the better. I think he is beginning to settle down and has stopped fermenting. Considering his undoubted talent, I cannot help thinking that he is still capable of doing a great deal.' This was the first and almost the only occasion on which Turgenev did not speak with enthusiasm of Tolstoy's writings. The wound left by their last encounter, after which he had declared that he had finished with Tolstoy, had still, it seems, not completely healed, but he was undoubtedly impressed by Tolstoy's chastened mood, for otherwise he would not have arranged to meet him again on his return to Russia in the spring.

Meanwhile great events were taking place in Russia. On 19 February 1861 (O. S.), the manifesto emancipating the peasants was published, and Turgenev was present at the special thanksgiving service in the Greek Orthodox Church in Paris. During the sermon, he told Herzen, he shed tears, while Nicholas Turgenev, his distant relative and old Decembrist, broke into sobs. Most of the congregation, however, left before the sermon. 'The plantation-owners [i.e. the opponents of the emancipation of the serfs],' Turgenev wrote to Herzen, 'here and in Petersburg, are furious because of the rumours that the peasants would be given one fourth of their land. . . . I still can't believe', he added, 'that we have lived to see this day. I am in a fever of excitement and mad with vexation that I am not in Russia.' He did not go back till May, however, and about a month before he left, he received a letter from Tolstoy, who was touring Europe at the time. Tolstoy asked Turgenev to read him his new novel—*Fathers and Sons*—and went on to complain that his

Three Momentous Years

'solitary reflections' had almost driven him to a point where he was beginning to hate everything. It was an ominous confession in view of their proposed meeting in Russia, but Turgenev did not heed it. He replied that he would be glad to read his new novel to Tolstoy, but that, unfortunately, he had written only half of it and hoped to finish it in the country. As for Tolstoy's feeling of hatred, he was sure that it was merely a symptom of the disappearance of youth. If only the good things passed away with one's youth, the other ages of man would be so unbearable that every individual would cut his throat at the age of thirty-two. 'Many disagreeable things', he went on, 'are carried along on the turbulent waves of youth and—carried away with them; and yet', he added sadly, 'there is nothing better in the world than those waves.' He concluded by expressing his hope that, having learnt to appreciate Goethe's *Faust* and Homer, Tolstoy would soon perhaps learn to appreciate Shakespeare, too.

Turgenev returned to Petersburg on 12 May and immediately left for Spasskoye. Tolstoy came to see him on 26 May and on the following day they set off in Turgenev's carriage for Stepanovka, Fet's new 200-acre estate. Fet received them in great style and, knowing how fond Turgenev was of good food, entertained them to an excellent dinner. They drank champagne in honour of the occasion and then adjourned to a little copse. There they lay down in the long grass and carried on an amicable discussion. So far there was not even the proverbial small cloud on the horizon to warn them of the approaching storm. But all the omens were already there. 'I must tell you', Turgenev wrote to Countess Lambert a few days after his quarrel with Tolstoy, 'that there existed an old antipathy between us. I avoided him as much as I could, but, without ceasing to hate me, he did his best to seek me out. . . . He seemed to wish to meet me for the sole purpose of provoking and enraging me.' This was undoubtedly what Turgenev had felt at the time. As for Tolstoy, he was, as he had admitted to Turgenev earlier, going through a bad phase of mental depression from which he had not yet recovered. Only a spark was needed to explode the gunpowder barrel of mutual distrust and hostility. This spark was provided by Mrs. Fet next morning.

They all met in the dining-room at eight o'clock. Turgenev sat on Mrs. Fet's right and Tolstoy on her left. They were waiting for

Three Momentous Years

coffee to be brought in. 'Knowing the importance Turgenev at the time attached to the education of his daughter,' Fet writes in his memoirs, 'my wife asked him if he was satisfied with his English governess.' An apparently innocent question if Turgenev had not felt uneasy about the way he was trying to marry Paulinette off to any suitable man so that she should no longer interfere with his attempts to regain the favour of Pauline Viardot. It was this feeling of guilt that made him enlarge unnecessarily on the splendid virtues of Mrs. Innis and, as was his habit when he was carried away, make a rash statement that gave Tolstoy a wonderful opportunity of once more exposing his 'insincerity'. Mrs. Innis, Turgenev said, had asked him with true English punctiliousness to fix the sum his daughter could spend on charity. 'And now,' he went on, 'the Englishwoman insists that my daughter should collect and mend the tattered clothes of the poor and then return them to their owners.' It is more than likely that Turgenev realised at once the enormity he had committed in extolling that particular example of middle-class Victorian charity. But it was too late. Tolstoy seemed only to have been waiting for such an opening and he pounced at once.

'And do you consider it a good thing?' he asked challengingly.

'Of course,' replied Turgenev, who was already, as he later confessed to Countess Lambert, 'inwardly incensed.' 'It puts the benefactress in touch with the everyday needs of the poor.'

'And I', Tolstoy went on relentlessly, 'consider that a well-dressed girl with filthy and stinking rags in her lap is playing an insincere and theatrical part.'

By this time they were glaring at each other across the table. Turgenev's face was flushed and (as Fet observed) his nostrils dilated.

'Don't speak like that!' he cried.

'Why', Tolstoy remarked calmly, 'shouldn't I speak if I know that what I am saying is right?'

Fet shouted across the table to Turgenev to drop the subject, but by that time nothing in the world could have stopped him.

'If you don't shut up,' he shouted, 'I'll slap your face!'

The actual words Turgenev used (if Tolstoy is to be believed) were much more offensive, being a rather vulgar version of the

Three Momentous Years

same insult. He then jumped up from his chair and, clasping his head, rushed excitedly into the next room. A moment later, he came back and apologised to his hostess as well as to Tolstoy. 'I expected an immediate challenge,' he wrote to Countess Lambert, 'but at first he [Tolstoy] was extremely polite and gentle, and it was only after I had apologised to him in writing that he flared up with vexation and sent me the challenge.'

Realising how utterly impossible it was for the two men to stay in the same house together, Fet immediately had Turgenev's carriage brought to the door and got him off to Spasskoye. He then sent for a coach and got Tolstoy off to his brother-in-law's estate of Novosyolki. From Novosyolki Tolstoy sent a brief note to Turgenev asking for a written apology which he could show to Fet. He promised to wait for it at Bogoslovo, the post-station nearest to Novosyolki. Turgenev's reply was very formal:

'Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter, I can only repeat what I considered it my duty to tell you at Fet's; carried away by a feeling of involuntary enmity, the reasons for which I need not go into here, I insulted you without any positive provocation on your part, for which I apologised to you. What happened this morning showed clearly that any attempt to bring about friendly relations between such incompatible natures as yours and mine is quite useless; and I carry out my duty towards you the more readily because the present letter probably puts an end to our relations with one another. I sincerely hope that you will find it satisfactory and I readily give you my consent to make any use of it you may think fit.

'I have the honour to remain, dear Sir,

'Your most humble servant,

Iv. Turgenev.'

Turgenev sent off the letter by special messenger, but mistakenly addressed it to Novosyolki and not to Bogoslovo. Meanwhile Tolstoy was losing patience. In spite of the fact that Turgenev had apologised to him in the presence of Fet and his wife and he had accepted his apology, he now thought it necessary to send another letter to Turgenev demanding satisfaction. He did not want the sort of ridiculous duel, he wrote, that was common among literary men and that usually ended up with champagne toasts. He meant to

Three Momentous Years

shoot it out with Turgenev in earnest and he therefore asked him to bring with him two *rifles* to the woods near Bogoslovo where he would be waiting for him. Having sent off this extraordinary challenge in which no mention was made of any seconds, Tolstoy dispatched a man to his nearest estate for two rifles and ammunition. In reply to Tolstoy's challenge, Turgenev wrote:

'Dear Sir,

Your manservant tells me that you wish to receive an answer to your letter; but I don't think there is anything I can add to what I have already written to you. Except perhaps that I recognise your right to demand satisfaction from me; you chose to be satisfied with the apology which I had offered to you and which I repeated. That was entirely up to you. Let me say without phrases that I would willingly stand up to your fire in order to expiate my truly insane words. That I should have uttered them is so contrary to the habits of my whole life that I can only attribute it to the irritation aroused by the extreme and continual antagonism of our views. This is no excuse, I mean no justification, but an explanation. And, therefore, since I am parting from you for ever—such occurrences are ineffaceable and irrevocable—I consider it my duty to repeat once more that in this affair you were absolutely in the right and I in the wrong. I may add that it is not a question of courage, which I may or may not wish to show, but an acknowledgment of your right to challenge me to a duel in the accepted manner of course (with seconds) as well as your right to accept my apology. You have chosen what seemed best to you and all I can do is to submit to your decision.

'I beg you once again to accept the assurance of my deep respect,
Iv. Turgenev.'

By the time Tolstoy received Turgenev's second letter he must have realised that this time it was he who had made a fool of himself. He sent off a curt note to Turgenev in which he declared that he 'despised' him and that if he accepted his apology it was not because of the incompatibility of their natures, but for a reason he (Turgenev) knew. In a letter to Fet, Tolstoy admitted that his second letter to Turgenev containing his challenge was 'rather cruel' and declared that, so far as he was concerned, that was the end of 'the sorry affair'.

Three Momentous Years

A week later Turgenev wrote to Annenkov: 'I have finally quarrelled with Tolstoy (the whole thing, *entre nous*, was within a hair's-breadth of a duel—and even now it may still end in one). It was all my fault, but the break between us was, scientifically speaking, conditioned by our long-standing antagonism and the incompatibility of our natures. I felt that he hated me and I could not understand why he kept coming back to me again and again. I should have kept away from him as before, but I tried to meet him half-way and merely ended up by nearly meeting him with a pistol in my hand. The truth is that I never liked him, either, so why didn't I realise it long ago?'

But the affair was not over by any means. The farcical ending of what was, when all is said and done, a farcical business is described by Turgenev in a letter to Annenkov on 13 October 1861, from Paris: 'I have to tell you a rather cheerless piece of news,' Turgenev wrote. 'After a long struggle with myself I sent Tolstoy a challenge and told Ketcher about it, so that he should counteract the rumours that have been spread in Moscow. In this affair—except the beginning of it which was my fault entirely—I did everything I could to avoid such an idiotic ending; but Tolstoy chose to put me *au pied du mur*—and I could not act otherwise. In Tula, in the Spring we shall fight a duel. However, this is the copy of the letter I sent him:

'Dear Sir,

Before my departure from Petersburg, I learnt that you distributed copies of my last letter to you in Moscow, and furthermore that you called me a coward who did not want to fight with you, etc. It was impossible for me to return to the Province of Tula, and I continued my journey. But as I consider your behaviour—after all that I have done to make good the words that escaped me—to be both offensive and dishonourable, I warn you that this time I shall not let it pass without attention and, on my return to Russia next Spring, shall demand satisfaction from you. I consider it necessary to inform you that I have made known my intention to my friends in Moscow so that they may counteract the rumours you have spread.

Iv. Turgenev.'

'So it would seem', Turgenev concluded, 'that I myself made fun of the ridiculous habit of our noblemen to fight duels (In Pavel

Three Momentous Years

Petrovich: *Fathers and Sons*) and have acted like them. But I suppose it is so written in the Book of Destiny.'

All this time Tolstoy was wrestling with his soul, calling Turgenev a scoundrel one day and wishing to beg his pardon another. In the end he did write a letter to Turgenev, apologising if he had offended him and declaring that it made him very sad to think that he had an enemy. The letter only reached Turgenev three months later, that is, after he had sent his challenge to Tolstoy.¹

'I have only today received Tolstoy's letter,' he wrote to Fet on 7 January 1862, 'which he sent in September through Davydov's bookshop (how do you like the punctuality of our merchants?). In that letter he speaks of his intention of insulting me, apologises, etc. And almost at the same time I sent him a challenge as a result of the slanderous statements I think I wrote to you about. From all this it must be concluded that our constellations move through the ether in decidedly hostile conjunctions and therefore we had better, as he himself suggests, avoid meeting. But you may write to him (or tell him, if you see him) that (without any phrases or jokes) I love him *from a distance*, that I respect him and watch his career with sympathetic interest, but that when I am near him everything takes on a different complexion. It can't be helped! We must carry on as though we inhabited different planets or lived in different centuries.'

Fet forwarded Turgenev's message to Tolstoy and in reply received the following characteristic note:—

'Turgenev is a scoundrel who ought to be horse-whipped, which I ask you to transmit to him as accurately as you transmit to me his precious sayings in spite of my repeated requests to you not to speak of him.

Count L. Tolstoy.

'And I ask you not to write to me any more, for I shall not open your letters or Turgenev's.'

Turgenev's comments on this outburst of bad temper is contained in his letter to Fet of 14 January: 'I feel the need of apologising to you for the quite unexpected brick, or *tuile*, as the French say, which fell on your head as a result of my letter. The only thing that comforts me a little is that I could never have expected such an

¹ In reply to Turgenev's challenge, Tolstoy wrote: 'I apologise, confess my fault and decline your challenge.'

Three Momentous Years

outburst from Tolstoy and really thought of arranging everything for the best; it seems, however, that *this is such a wound* that the best thing to do is to leave it alone!

9

'I have thought of a subject for a novel,' Turgenev wrote to Countess Lambert from Ventnor on 18 August 1860. 'I wonder what will come of it?' If he had known, *Fathers and Sons* might never have been written. For the novel occupies a unique place in literary history: never before or after has a work of fiction, which had nothing to do with politics, produced such an explosion of political passions. It was, as Turgenev expressed it, like pouring oil on a flame. And yet, the idea of *Fathers and Sons* as it occurred to him on the Isle of Wight, had no explosive matter in it. He had merely thought of writing a novel with a tragic hero. Already in October of the previous year he wrote to Countess Lambert that there was something tragic in the life of every human being, though this tragic element was very often hidden under 'the banal surface of life'. People who could not see what was happening beneath that surface, did not suspect that they were the heroes of a tragedy. Around him, for instance, he saw people living quiet and peaceful lives, but when he looked more closely he noticed that everyone of them carried within him the seeds of tragedy, sown either by himself, or by history, or by the development of the people to which he belonged. 'And besides,' Turgenev concluded, 'we are all condemned to die. Can there be anything more tragic than that?'

One day in Ventnor, Turgenev told a correspondent, he was taking a walk on the beach and thinking of death. Immediately after that he saw in his mind's eye a picture of a dying man. It was Bazarov. The scene produced a powerful impression upon him and later the other characters of the novel and its action gradually unfolded before him. Thus it was that his first idea of the novel revolved round the death of its hero. And as the chief character of a tragedy, Bazarov had to be a heroic figure—a giant, 'huge, wild and gloomy, firmly rooted in the soil, strong, bitter and honest, and—doomed to destruction because for all his elemental force he was merely standing at the portals of the future.' This is how Turgenev

Three Momentous Years

described his first impression of Bazarov in a letter to a correspondent on 14 April 1862. The critics who regarded Bazarov's death as a mere accident and, therefore, as the chief fault of the novel, made the fundamental mistake of overlooking its tragic theme; and those who accused Turgenev of libelling the younger generation because Bazarov did not *act*, overlooked the main reason for his tragedy, namely that Turgenev conceived him as a man who was born ahead of his time. Indeed, the venom with which the adherents of the progressive movement in Russia attacked Turgenev is largely explained by their subconscious realisation of their own helplessness in 'raising reality to the reasonable demands which have already been created'. Besides, Bazarov did *act*, for, as Turgenev put it, he stood for 'the triumph of democracy over the aristocracy'—the main theme of the novel. 'My whole novel', Turgenev wrote to the poet and critic Sluchevsky, 'is directed against the nobility as the foremost class of Russian society.'

Turgenev finished the novel at Spasskoye on Sunday, 30 July 1861 (O. S.). 'An hour and a half ago,' he wrote in his diary on that day, 'I at last finished my novel. I don't know whether it will be successful or not. The *Contemporary Review* will probably sneer at me for Bazarov and [Dobrolyubov?] will not believe that all the time I was writing my novel I felt an involuntary attraction to him.' When Prince Peter Kropotkin, whom Turgenev met in Paris, remarked to him that he could not help feeling that he (Turgenev) did not love Bazarov as he loved the other heroes of his novels, Turgenev replied: 'On the contrary, I did love him. When we come home I'll show you my diary in which I described how I wept when I finished my novel with the death of Bazarov.' In a letter to Herzen he wrote: 'With the exception of Bazarov's views on art, I share almost all his opinions.' And as proof that he really meant it all, he dedicated *Fathers and Sons* to Belinsky.

On his return to Paris in September 1861, Turgenev began the revision of the novel, cutting it down and altering it considerably. As usual, he read it to his friends, who do not seem to have been greatly impressed by it; some of them even advised him to burn it. He himself felt that in view of the tense political situation in Russia, where student disturbances had just then been suppressed by the police, it might be better to postpone its publication. But, as he

Three Momentous Years

wrote to Dostoevsky on 7 January 1862, 'the merchant [i.e. Katkov in whose monthly *The Russian Herald* it was published two months later] insists that he must have the goods I sold him, so that I shall just have to let him publish it *tel quel*.' To Countess Lambert he wrote on 14 March: '*Je suis résigné à un fiasco, mais heureusement j'ai l'épiderme peu sensible*.' He certainly needed a very thick skin to withstand the avalanche of abuse which the publication of *Fathers and Sons* had set off. The first reaction to the novel from Russia was, surprisingly enough, very favourable. Dostoevsky wrote him an 'enthusiastic' letter. 'He assures me', Turgenev told Botkin, 'that this novel alone is worth all that I have written, compares it to *Dead Souls* (!) etcetera.' Unfortunately, Dostoevsky's letter has not been preserved, but it is evident from Turgenev's reply that his analysis of the novel and, particularly, of Bazarov's character showed that he had grasped 'thoroughly' what Turgenev wanted to express. 'It is', Turgenev wrote, 'as if you had penetrated into my very soul and felt what I did not even think it necessary to put into words.' Turgenev hoped that the ordinary reader would see at least half of what Dostoevsky had seen. 'Now', he declared, 'I am no longer worried about my novel: it has done what I intended it to do—and I have nothing to worry about.'

But he spoke too soon: the storm that broke over *Fathers and Sons* gave him plenty to worry about. He had expected the *Contemporary Review* to sneer at him, but he certainly did not expect to be accused of having written his novel with the sole purpose of expressing his personal hatred of the younger generation and of exposing his enemies as scoundrels. Bazarov, according to the reviewer, was 'a monster with a tiny head and an enormous mouth' and 'a most spiteful caricature'. Chernyshevsky entirely agreed with the reviewer. He was quite convinced that Bazarov was a 'caricature' of Dobrolyubov, who had died a few months earlier. He was sure that Turgenev 'hated' Dobrolyubov because the young critic had hurt his vanity. Ten years later, in his article *Concerning Fathers and Sons*, Turgenev revealed that Bazarov's prototype was not Dobrolyubov at all but a young country doctor, in whom he had first perceived the stirrings of the ideas which were later associated with 'nihilism'.

It was the term 'nihilist', used by Turgenev as a substitute for

Three Momentous Years

'revolutionary', that caught the public imagination at once. Turgenev returned to Petersburg at the beginning of June 1862 during the mysterious fires, which the authorities accused the 'revolutionaries' of starting, and the first words that escaped the lips of the first acquaintance he met on Nevsky Avenue were: 'Look, what your nihilists are doing! They are setting Petersburg on fire!' Turgenev was appalled: he noticed a coldness amounting almost to indignation in many people he liked and with whose views he sympathised, and he received congratulations and almost kisses from people whom he regarded as his political enemies. He was receiving letters from all over Russia, some of his correspondents accusing him of being a die-hard reactionary and telling him that they were burning his photographs 'with a contemptuous laugh', and others reproaching him for kowtowing to the 'nihilists' and 'grovelling at the feet of Bazarov'.

'Many people who were only waiting for an excuse to put an end to a movement which had taken hold of Russian society', Turgenev wrote, 'availed themselves of the word "nihilist". That word was used by me not as a term of reproach or abuse, but as an accurate and appropriate description of a new historic fact; but it was transformed almost into a badge of dishonour.'

In a letter to Saltykov-Shchedrin fourteen years later, he expressed his regret at having ever used the unfortunate word. 'I am ready to confess', he wrote on 3 January 1876, 'that I had no right to give our reactionary rabble an opportunity of getting hold of a mere word. The writer in me should have made that sacrifice to the citizen, and that is why I consider the alienation of the young people and all the reproaches hurled at me as justified. The problem it gave rise to was more important than artistic truth—and I should have realised that in advance. . . .'

As for Bazarov, Turgenev confessed that he was not surprised that he remained an enigma to many people, since he himself had no clear idea how he had come to create him. 'It was—please, don't laugh—a sort of fatality,' he explained in the same letter, 'something that did not depend on the author, something that was stronger than the author himself. One thing, though, I do know: I never had any preconceived idea or tendency: I wrote naïvely, as though myself marvelling at the things that emerged from my pen. . . . Tell

Three Momentous Years

me honestly,' he concluded, 'can anyone be offended by being compared to Bazarov? Don't you think yourself that he is the most likeable of all my characters?'

But it was more than fourteen years before that idea of Bazarov's character was generally accepted by literary critics in Russia.

Дворянское Гнѣздо,

повѣсть Ивана Тургенева.

Вздумавъ въ началѣ 1858-го года, я долго думалъ не приступать ли къ ней, но въ концѣ концовъ решилъ; началъ въ разсказѣ своемъ въ началѣ 1858-го года въ Гаскони. —

Кончена въ Понизовкѣ, 27-го октября
1858-го года въ Ступино

1858.

Manuscript Title Page of A Nobleman's Nest

[A Nobleman's Nest | A Short Novel by Ivan Turgenev | First thought of it at the beginning of 1856; did not start writing it for a long time, constantly turning it over in my head; began working on it in the summer of 1858 in Spasskoye | Finished it on Monday, 27th October, 1858, in Spasskoye |]

PART EIGHT

Baden-Baden

2

The eight years between 1863 and 1871, during which Turgenev lived in the fashionable resort of Baden-Baden, are generally considered to belong to 'the happy' period of his life. But it was a deceptive kind of happiness—an Indian summer whose calm was broken by sudden gales: dark, obsessive forebodings; the death of many old friends; malignant attacks of gout, which kept him bedridden for months; and the growing conviction that (as he wrote to Herzen and Fet) 'after fifty a man lives in a beleaguered fortress which will sooner or later be taken by the enemy—death.' It was the most pessimistic period of his life. Even the earth, to which he was so attached, filled him, like the empty heavens, with terror and loathing. On a beautiful July day in 1868 he wrote to Pauline Viardot from his Spasskoye park: 'The earth around me seems to be a veritable shambles. I have just saved the life of a tiny ant which, in spite of a desperate resistance, a much bigger one was dragging off and rolling in the sand with the sudden leaps of a tiger. No sooner had I saved the little one than it noticed a half dead gnat and seized it with the same ferocity; this time I let it be. Destroy or be destroyed—there is no middle way: let us destroy!'

In *Phantoms*, which he finished at the end of 1863, he cast a bird's eye view upon the earth and its inhabitants and was filled with disgust. 'The earth, that flat surface, spread below me,' he wrote, 'the whole globe with its population, ephemeral and infirm, crushed by want, grief and disease, chained to a clod of contemptible dust; this brittle, rough crust, this excrescence on the

Baden-Baden

fiery speck of our planet, with its outcrop of mould which we grandiloquently call the vegetable kingdom; these men-flies, with their dwellings stuck together with mud, with the microscopic traces of their paltry and monotonous activity, their amusing struggle with the unchangeable and inescapable—how sick I grew of it all suddenly! My heart turned over slowly and I did not want to gaze at these insignificant sights, at this vulgar exhibition, any longer. . . . Yes, I felt bored, even worse than bored. I did not even feel pity for my fellow-men: all my feelings were submerged in one feeling which I do not even dare to name: in a feeling of disgust, and stronger than anything else and more than anything else was my feeling of disgust with—myself.'

What was his attitude as an artist to this 'contemptible bustle of life'? He set it down in *Enough: A Fragment from the Diary of a Dead Artist*, which he wrote in 1864. 'Enough!' he wrote. 'Stop rushing about, stop striving—it is time you shrank into yourself: it is time you took your head into your hands and told your heart to be still. Stop luxuriating in the sweet delights of vague but ravishing sensations, stop running after every new form of beauty—everything has been tried before, everything has been experienced a thousand times before—I am tired. . . . Oh, I have grown old! Once, such thoughts would never have occurred to me—once, in those halcyon days when I used to blaze like a sunrise and sing like a nightingale. Everything, I confess, has grown dim and colourless around me; my whole life has withered. The light, which lends it colour, significance and strength and which flows from a man's heart, is extinguished in me. No, it is not extinguished, but it is scarcely smouldering, with no rays and no warmth.' It was all, he quoted from *Macbeth*, a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. 'If Shakespeare were to be born again,' he went on, 'he would not have had to disown his Hamlet or his Lear—his keen glance would not have discovered anything new in man's existence. . . . Why bother to prove to midges that they are midges? . . . It is not the conventions of art that trouble me, but its transitoriness. . . . When all is said and done, nature is irresistible; there is no need for her to be in a hurry: sooner or later she will take what is hers; she creates while destroying, and it makes no difference to her what she creates or what she destroys so long

Baden-Baden

as life does not perish, so long as death does not forfeit its rights. . . . How are we, poor artists, to cope with this deaf and dumb force, this force which was born blind and which does not even celebrate its victories, but goes on and on, devouring everything on its way? . . . It is not necessary for beauty to live for ever in order to be eternal—one brief moment is enough for it. . . . But man does not repeat himself like a butterfly, and his handiwork, his art, his free creation, once destroyed, perishes for ever. . . . He alone has been given creative powers, but, strange and terrible to say, we are creators—for an hour, just as there used to be a Caliph for an hour. Herein lies our superiority and our curse: every one of these creators is a separate entity, he himself and no one else; it is *I*, just as if I had been created for some set purpose, according to some previously made plan; every one of them dimly comprehends his own significance, he feels that he is akin to something higher, something eternal—and yet he lives only for one brief moment and *for* that brief moment. . . . Sit in your filth, dear friend, and reach for the stars! The greatest among us are those who comprehend this contradiction more deeply than anyone else. . . . Why, then,' he asked in conclusion, 'should an artist bother to go to this flea-market of phantoms, where buyer and seller usually cheat and swindle each other, where everything is so loud and noisy and—so poor and trivial? Why go back to this world where only those who have no right to live hang on to life and, deafening themselves with their own cries, hurry along spasmodically to an unknown and incomprehensible end? . . . No—no—enough—enough—enough!'

Enough did not have a good press in Russia; nor did Turgenev's friends have anything good to say for these 'lyrical effusions' of his. 'I'm ready to tell you in secret,' Turgenev wrote to Fet in October 1865, 'that not only one Botkin, but not even one hundred Botkins (Lord, what a sight that would be!) will ever convince me that *Enough* is just a string of words. It was not thus that it was written.' But Tolstoy, who was not always happy in his criticisms of Turgenev's works, hit the nail on the head this time when he wrote to Fet that he did not like *Enough* because 'the personal and subjective is only good when it is full of life and passion, while here we have subjectivity full of lifeless suffering'. This phase of 'lifeless

suffering', which made Pauline Viardot call Turgenev '*le plus triste des hommes*', drove him to search for an answer to the riddle of life and explains some of his attempts to deal with the supernatural, as, for instance, in his story *The Dog*, which he wrote in 1864 and which he declared to be a failure, and, later, under the influence of Charcot's experiments, to try to lift the veil in such stories as *A Strange Story*, *The Dream*, *The Song of Triumphant Love*, *Clara Milich*, and some of his *Poems in Prose*.

These preoccupations with the occult had certainly some strong connection with the superstitious fears he had inherited from his early childhood. But his repeated assurances that at no time in his life had he dabbled in mysticism were quite sincere. 'I never had, and never shall have, anything to do with mysticism,' he told Herzen in April 1862. 'In my attitude to God I adhere to the opinion of Faust:

"Wer darf Ihn nennen
Und wer bekennen:
Ich glaub Ihn!
Wer empfinden
Und sich unterwinden
Zu sagen: ich glaub' Ihn nicht!"¹

Eight years later he again assured a Russian critic that he had never been interested in mysticism. Replying to the critic's objections to the heroine of his *Strange Story*, an ecstatically religious young girl who leaves her comfortable home to follow a 'holy fool', he wrote: 'Must every character be something in the nature of a moral prescription: this is how it should or should not act? People like that [i.e. the heroine of *A Strange Story*] existed and therefore have a right to be represented in a work of art. I do not admit of any other immortality; and this immortality of human life in the eyes of art and history lies at the very foundation of all our activities. . . . I am interested in one thing only,' he went on: 'the physiognomy of life and its truthful representation, and I am entirely indifferent to mysticism in all its forms. In the plot of *Phantoms* for instance, I only saw the possibility of drawing a series of pictures.' He made

¹ Who dares to name Him and who dares to profess: I believe in Him! Who dares to feel and who dares to say: I do not believe in Him!

Baden-Baden

the same statement to Botkin even before the publication of *Phantoms*. 'There is no allegory in it at all,' he wrote to him on 8 December 1863. 'It is just a series of mental *dissolving views*, evoked by a transitory and really very dark and painful condition of my ego.' In his introduction to *Phantoms*, published a month later in the first issue of Dostoevsky's periodical *Epoch*, Turgenev wrote: 'Every true work of art must speak for itself and stand on its own feet and therefore needs no preliminary explanations and interpretations. As I do not believe, however, that *Phantoms* belongs to that kind of work, I should like to ask the reader, who perhaps has a right to expect something more serious from me, not to look for any allegory or hidden meaning in the phantasy I am offering him, but simply to regard it as a series of pictures which are only superficially connected with one another.'

2

Turgenev's reconciliation with Pauline Viardot had a sediment of bitterness in it. It was not that he could not forgive her her past treatment of him. It was the reason that made her resume her relations with him that rankled. In April 1862, he wrote to Annenkov about feeling old. 'A writer who has grown old before his time and a prima donna who has lost her voice—of what use are they?' he asked. But Pauline Viardot did not share his pessimism. Having lost her voice, she still hoped to be able to carry on as a composer and as a teacher of music. It was there that Turgenev became indispensable to her. She had thought of putting a number of Russian poems to music, and what better man was there to advise her on the selection of the poems and help her to sell them in Russia? Turgenev not only chose the fifteen poems, but saw Pauline Viardot's album through the press and supplied it with a special introduction. The enterprise was not a success, but Pauline Viardot did not lose heart. She had decided to settle in Baden-Baden, open a school of singing there and give matinée concerts to the select clientèle of the fashionable holiday resort. A concert hall of her own was what she wanted most, and Turgenev built it for her in the house he had built in the style of Louis XIII, ostensibly for himself. He did more: he wrote the libretti of four operettas for

Baden-Baden

which she composed the music, and Pauline Viardot and her pupils played the different parts. Turgenev himself was given the comic parts of the Pasha in *Trop de Femmes*, the ogre in *L'Ogre*, and the sorcerer in *Craquemiche ou le Dernier Sorcier*. 'I amused myself by writing libretti for operas Madame Viardot delightfully set to music,' he wrote to Paulinette on 9 September 1867. 'One of them, entitled *Trop de Femmes*, in which I play the rôle of the pasha, has had such a great success that it was given five times and the Queen of Prussia has expressed a wish to see it.' A week later he wrote to Botkin: 'Our second operetta *Le Dernier Sorcier* has had an even greater success. Tomorrow we are giving a second performance at which the Queen of Prussia—*rien que cela*—is to be present. The music is indeed most charming.' And when Botkin expressed his doubts whether Turgenev ought to waste his time on such 'talented jokes', he assured him that all who saw the operetta, including such excellent musicians as Clara Schumann and Anton Rubinstein, had advised Pauline Viardot to orchestrate it. But occasionally even he was assailed by doubts. 'I must confess however,' he wrote to Ludwig Pietsch on 26 October, 'that when I lay stretched out on the floor in the part of the Pasha and saw a cold sarcastic smile of disgust play on the haughty lips of your Crown Princess [Victoria, the daughter of Queen Victoria] something went cold inside me. You know how little I care for my dignity, but even I could not help thinking that things had gone a little too far.' But next year the operettas were performed again in the presence of royalty and on 8 April 1869, *Le Dernier Sorcier* was given at Weimar in the presence of the King and Queen of Prussia and the Duke and Duchess of Weimar. Liszt, Turgenev told his friends, was greatly interested in that particular operetta and had himself orchestrated five numbers. But it was not a success. 'Everything has passed off very well,' was all Turgenev had to say about it. But he did write a notice of it for a Russian paper, which only provoked a few sarcastic references in the Petersburg press. 'My letter from Weimar', Turgenev wrote to Polonsky on 26 April 1869 from Baden-Baden, 'was of course an advertisement, but an advertisement about a thing I consider to be excellent. To find it tactless of me to utter the name of Madame Viardot after an acquaintance of 25 years and in connection with something which took place before the eyes of hundreds of people

Baden-Baden

—that exceeds even my expectations.' But the point Turgenev could not see was that the public performance of the operetta at Weimar was a fiasco. Pauline Viardot drew the right lesson from it: she realised that she had no future as a composer and confined herself to teaching singing.

The musical matinées deserve to be mentioned, too, if only for the fact that Pauline Viardot showed her great ability as an organ player and that, while she played, Turgenev was busy pumping away at the bellows. The matinées, too, were a great social occasion during the summer season and the most august audiences trooped meekly to the concerts to be seen in their fineries perhaps even more than to hear Pauline Viardot play and her pupils sing. Brahms was present at several of them. Pauline Viardot, too, sometimes sang. Her interpretation of Schubert's *Doppelgänger*, Turgenev wrote to Pietsch on 26 April 1865, sent 'a light shiver of death' down his spine and made 'cold tears of rapture' start in his eyes.

His liaison with Pauline Viardot had been resumed, and there is no sign in his letters that his feeling for her had diminished in intensity, though at times a note of resentment crept in. When in May 1864 she returned to Baden-Baden heart-broken after the death of her mother in Brussels, he wrote to his daughter that he wondered if she would ever mourn like that after his death. The passionate avowals of love in German reappear again in the letters he wrote to Pauline Viardot between 1865 and 1868. 'O *meine Freundin*,' one such passage, written on 10 February 1867, from Petersburg, reads, '*ich bin so gluecklich bei dem Gedanken, dass alles in mir Ihrem Wesen auf das innigste verknuepft ist. Bin ich ein Baum, so sind Sie zugleich meine Wurzel und meine Krone.*'¹ A week later he told her that every time she thought of him, she could be sure that her image stood before his eyes and he worshipped her. 'That is literally so,' he added. In March 1867, Pauline Viardot was in Berlin. Turgenev stopped there for a few days on his way to Russia. When he arrived in Petersburg he wrote to her this impassioned avowal in German, which for sheer intensity of feeling

¹ Oh, my dear friend, I am so happy at the thought that everything in you is so inextricably bound up with me. . . . If I am a tree, then you are both my roots and my crown!

Baden-Baden

surpasses anything he had written to her as a young man: '*Theuerste Freundin, einziges angebetenes Wesen. . . . Ich kann Ihnen nicht sagen wie unendlich traurig ich war. Diese Tage in Berlin, dieses ploetzliche, herrliche Wiedersehen, und dann diese herbe Trennung, das ist wirklich etwas zuviel fuer mich gewesen, und ich bin unter der Last der unvergesslichen Eindruecke foermlich zusammengebrochen, wie es mit mir noch nie gewesen war. Ach, mein Gefuehl fuer Sie ist zu gross und zu maechtig. Ich kann nicht mehr, ich kann nicht weit von Ihnen leben. Ich muss Ihre liebe Naehe fuehlen, geniessen; der Tag, wo mir Ihre Augen nicht geleuchtet haben, ist verlorener. . . . Aber genug, genug! Sonst werde ich nicht meiner maechtig,*'¹ Three days later, in another postscript, he told her that 'no human breast' had ever cherished such a love as his. 'Adoration', he wrote, 'is the least one can say about it. . . . I fall down at your feet and kiss them a thousand times and am yours for ever and ever.'

Pauline Viardot's feelings towards Turgenev, however, had not changed. She wielded her power over him without asking herself whether she hurt him or not. Like Varvara Petrovna, she never yielded an inch, and that too, no doubt, was part of the secret of the hold she had over him. During the Baden-Baden period there was no other woman who attracted him. But when at the age of fifty she openly took another lover and reduced him to the same status as her husband, the status of *un homme raisonnable par excellence*, he made a last feeble attempt at showing his resentment, and during that year he wrote no letters to her from Russia. But there were no more stormy scenes. 'Happiness', he wrote in one of his last letters to Countess Lambert, 'comes easier to me now. . . .'

The person who took second place in his affections after Pauline Viardot was no longer his daughter, but Claudie, or Didie, as he affectionately called Pauline Viardot's second daughter. The little Pauline had not let the big Pauline enthrall her father without a

¹ My dearest friend, my only adored one. . . . I cannot tell you how infinitely sad I am. Those days in Berlin, that sudden, wonderful meeting, and then this bitter parting—that has really been something too much for me, and I feel so utterly shattered by the heavy load of unforgettable impressions as I have never been before. Oh, my feeling for you is too great and too powerful. I cannot bear it any longer. I cannot live far from you. I must feel and enjoy your dear presence near me; the day on which your eyes do not shine upon me is lost for me. . . . But enough, enough! Or else I shall lose control of myself.

Baden-Baden

fight. She had a very practical mind and she realised very well that if Pauline Viardot had changed her attitude towards her father it was because of his fame and money. When Turgenev took her with him to Baden-Baden in 1863, she decided to have it out with Pauline Viardot, which she did in a manner that was not at all ladylike. To Turgenev's horror and utter confusion (he was present at the battle, but was not allowed to take part in it), Pauline Viardot did not mince her words, either. But it all ended, as might have been expected, in Paulinette's utter discomfiture. Never again was she invited to Baden-Baden. Turgenev found a comfortable flat for her and Mrs. Innis at Passy, where he visited them from time to time. When he went to Russia in 1864, he sent them on a tour of Italy and Switzerland. The question of her marriage became urgent. She had plenty of suitors, who buzzed round her like bees round a honeypot, but their greed for Turgenev's money was so obvious that they only inspired loathing in her. Turgenev did not press her. 'I have told you again and again', he wrote to her from Baden-Baden on 15 March 1864, 'that I never desired any marriage for you other than one based on affection and if there is no affection, the rest is of no importance. So', he concluded ruefully, 'there goes another suitor! Don't let us talk about it.'

But 'the right one', as Paulinette told Turgenev in 1865, did turn up at last, and on 25 February 1865, she was married to Gaston Bruère, who owned a glass factory at Rougemont. Turgenev gave her a dowry of 150,000 francs, two-thirds of which he paid on the signature of the marriage contract. He was very happy, he told Countess Lambert, for the marriage got his daughter out of a false situation and him out of a great responsibility. In fact, he was so overjoyed that he described his son-in law in the most glowing terms to all his friends. 'I find', he wrote to Countess Lambert. 'that he looks like Prince Albert, except that he is fair.' But even his pleasure at his daughter's marriage did not make him forget her quarrel with Pauline Viardot. 'I should be delighted to see you at Baden-Baden,' he wrote to his daughter on 23 April 1869, 'but *on one condition only*: that you do not renew your capricious behaviour and that you agree to visit Madame Viardot. If you have no intention of doing so, it will be better for you not to come to Baden-Baden, for that would be an outrage I could not tolerate. I

Baden-Baden

repeat, this condition is indispensable: you yourself would not like to place me in an impossible situation.' Paulinette never visited her father in Baden-Baden again.

3

Bakunin escaped from Siberia and arrived in London by way of the United States in December 1861. He came to Paris to see Turgenev, who offered to contribute 1,500 francs a year to a fund which he hoped to raise for him. Turgenev felt sorry for him. 'Between ourselves,' he wrote to Maria Markevich in September 1862, 'Bakunin is a ruin of a man. . . . The life of an old and played-out agitator is a heavy burden.' Several months after their meeting he wrote to Bakunin in London that he could rely on his friendship irrespective of any political disagreements they might have. The last remark referred to Turgenev's final disagreement with Herzen, who had joined forces with the poet Ogaryov and Bakunin in furthering the idea of a pan-Slav Federation of States with Russia at its head and their plan of convoking an agricultural convention in Russia to concert measures for the free distribution of land among the peasants. The main bone of contention between Turgenev and Herzen, as becomes evident from their long correspondence during 1862, was Herzen's final break with Western European political ideas and his adoption of the old Slavophil programme of organising the social and economic life of Russia on the basis of the ancient Russian agricultural commune and working-men's cooperative associations. Turgenev had visited London in April 1863 to discuss these problems with Herzen and his two associates. In his view, the only hope of a successful revolution in Russia rested on the minority of the educated classes. The rôle of the educated classes in Russia, he contended, was to be the purveyor of Western European civilisation to the people so that the people itself could then decide whether to accept it or not. Russia, he claimed, was not a Venus de Milo, ill-treated and in chains, but the same sort of strumpet as her elder Western European sisters, 'except, perhaps, that her behind is a little larger.' He advised Herzen to read Schopenhauer and stop prostrating himself before 'the Russian sheepskin' in which he (Herzen) saw the only salvation of Russia and the guarantee of

Baden-Baden

her future triumph, in fact, *das Absolute*, the same Absolute which Herzen derided in philosophy. 'All your ideals', he told Herzen, 'have been smashed and, as you can't live without an ideal, you are now erecting an altar to the new god, about whom, luckily, nothing is so far known. This god, it is true, does not behave as you expect him to behave, but that, you say, is only a temporary aberration, an accident, something that has been forcibly grafted on him by the authorities; your god loves the things you hate and hates the things you love, he accepts what you repudiate in his name—but you turn away your eyes, you stop up your ears, and with the ecstasy that is such a characteristic feature of all sceptics who are sick of scepticism, with this ultra-fanatical ecstasy, you go on talking of fresh spring breezes, beneficial storms, etc. History, philology, statistics—you care nothing for them, you care nothing for anything in the world; you care nothing for facts, for the incontrovertible fact, for example, that we, Russians, belong by language and racial origin to the European family of nations, *genus Europæensis*, and therefore must go along the same road; yet you attack everything that ought to be dear to every European, and therefore also to us, you attack civilisation, you attack the European conception of law, you even attack the revolution.' Turgenev conceded that Herzen did it all out of honest conviction, but that did not make things easier. 'Either', he told him, 'you must go on serving European ideals, or, having convinced yourself of their bankruptcy, have the courage to say: "Guilty," in the face of all the peoples of Europe and make no exception in favour of the new Russian Messiah, in whom you personally believe as little as in a European Messiah. You will say, "I am afraid it may make me unpopular and I shall not be able to carry on with my work of propaganda." I agree, but, on the one hand, to act as you are acting now is useless and, on the other, I still believe that you possess sufficient courage not to be afraid of any consequences from the enunciation of a truth in which you believe.' To Herzen such a *tirade*, as Rakitin would have said, meant that Turgenev had placed himself beyond the pale, and he told him so. Henceforth Turgenev was to be regarded as a traitor to the cause and was to be treated as such.

It was Herzen who was inadvertently responsible for getting

Baden-Baden

Turgenev into trouble with the Russian authorities. On 6 July 1862, a dinner was given in a London restaurant in honour of the fifth anniversary of the foundation of *The Bell*. Though proud of his ability to smell out spies, Herzen did not seem to mind the presence of strangers at this dinner. Between the traditional toasts he was told of an employee at the Petersburg office of an English shipping company who was in London and who was willing to smuggle letters into Russia. Next Sunday many of the people who were present at the dinner gathered at Herzen's house in Putney. The Russian employee of the English shipping company also came. Bakunin gave him three letters and Herzen, too, wrote a letter in which he mentioned Chernyshevsky. Among the visitors was a Russian secret agent, and on his arrival in Petersburg the employee of the shipping company was arrested. The letters found on him led to a trial of 'the persons accused of communicating with the London propagandists'. In one of his letters Bakunin told his sisters of Turgenev's undertaking to help him financially, and in January, 1863, Turgenev received a summons to appear before the Senate (The Russian High Court) to account for his relations with Herzen and his associates. He was threatened with the confiscation of all his Russian property if he refused to obey the summons.

'How do you like that?' Turgenev wrote to Herzen from Paris on 12 February. 'The Third Department [the Russian Secret Police] has summoned *me, me*, your antagonist, to Russia. . . . Why, this is the biggest joke that has ever been played on me.' He was very worried all the same and took the necessary steps for transferring his property to his brother in case of need. He decided not to return to Russia, where, like Chernyshevsky, he might have been arrested. On the advice of the Russian ambassador in Paris, he wrote a letter to Alexander II in which he asked that the charges against him should be sent to him, promising to reply to them with the utmost frankness. 'I have never concealed my political opinions,' he wrote to the Czar. 'My activities are known to the whole world, and I don't know of any reprehensible action that I have committed. I am a writer, your Majesty, my whole life has been expressed in my works and I am willing to be judged by them. I make bold to think that anyone who wishes to study them will agree that my opinions, while absolutely independent, have always

Baden-Baden

been distinguished by moderation. It is difficult to understand', he added, having in mind the Czar's well-known appreciation of his *Diary of a Sportsman*, 'how at the very time when you, Sire, have immortalised your name by an act of justice and humanity, suspicion should be thrown on a writer who in his own humble way has done his best to assist it.'

A year earlier Turgenev had sent a letter to Alexander II in which he had appealed for the release of an editor of a Polish paper arrested in connection with the Polish insurrection. That letter was ignored and, Turgenev related afterwards, when he met Alexander II in the street and bowed to him, the Czar looked sternly at him as though telling him to mind his own business. But this time his request was granted. The charges brought against him were so innocuous that he was no longer worried by the demand to appear before the Senate. He arrived in Petersburg in January 1864, and appeared before the Senate on the 19th of the same month. 'I was conducted with some pomp to a great chamber', he wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'and there saw six old gentlemen in uniform, wearing the stars of the Grand Cross. They kept me for an hour and read out my replies to the charges. They asked me if I had anything to add and then told me to appear again on Monday. They were all extremely polite and subdued, which is a good sign, and from what they said I gathered that the affair will be over much sooner than I expected.' Turgenev did not deny that he was trying to help Bakunin, an old university friend of his, but he denied having anything to do with his politics. A few days later Turgenev was informed that the charges against him were to be dropped and, on his undertaking to return to Russia if summoned to appear again, he was allowed to go abroad when he liked.

There was, however, an unpleasant sequel to the affair. Alarmed at the lenient way in which Turgenev had been treated in Petersburg, Herzen suspected the worst. He therefore published the following notice in *The Bell* on 28 January 1864: 'We are informed by a correspondent that a certain grey-haired Magdalene (of masculine gender) was very worried that the Emperor was not aware of her repentance, which made her sever all relations with the friends of her youth. She therefore wrote a letter to the Emperor in which she declared that she had been robbed of her strength, her

appetite, her peace of mind, her grey hair and her teeth.' Turgenev deeply resented this veiled implication that he had betrayed his old friends. 'That Bakunin', he wrote to Herzen on 2 April from Paris, 'who had taken money from me and who had put me in a difficult position by his irresponsible and stupid letters (others he ruined completely), that Bakunin, I say, should have been spreading the most disgusting slanders against me, is quite natural, and having known him for so many years, I did not expect anything else from him. But I did not expect you to throw mud at a man you have known for almost twenty years because he no longer shares your views. You don't seem to lag far behind Nicholas I who, too, convicted me without inquiring whether I was guilty or not. If I could have shown you the answers to the questions they sent me, you would have realised that not only have I said nothing derogatory about my friends, but that I had not even thought of disowning them. . . . The Emperor, who does not know me at all, did at least realise that he was dealing with an honest man. . . but my old friends, who I should have thought knew me well, did not hesitate to accuse me in print of a mean action. . . . This letter', he concluded, after asking Herzen not to cause him any more unpleasantness, 'shows that my old feelings towards you have not entirely disappeared: I should not have honoured Bakunin with half a word.'

Herzen, as becomes plain from the two preserved drafts of his reply, did not dream of withdrawing his accusations against Turgenev or apologising for them, and for the next two years they became completely estranged. It was Turgenev who first attempted a reconciliation in 1867, but he was cold-shouldered. They began corresponding again in 1869, and Turgenev's letter of 16 March contains a rather interesting revelation about Bakunin's religious beliefs. In his address to the Congress of the League of Peace and Freedom, which took place in Berlin that year, Bakunin proposed a resolution which declared that 'the existence of God was irreconcilable with the happiness, dignity, morality and freedom of men'. When the resolution was defeated, Bakunin with eighteen of his followers founded his International Alliance of Socialist Democracy with an anarchistic programme, the first clause of which proclaimed it to be an atheistic and anti-communist organisation. 'Bakunin has evidently changed his convictions,' Turgenev commented in his

Baden-Baden

letter to Herzen. 'The last time I saw him in London he still believed in a personal God and in a conversation with me, while walking in the street, in the moonlight, criticised you for your unbelief. Why, you ask, should his eyes not have been opened at last? But the question is whether such a demonstration is of any practical use. Is *that* what one ought to tell the workers now? . . . As for me,' he went on, 'I shall remain an individualist to the end and the new word coined by Bakunin—congregationalist—does not appeal to me: the violation of personal liberty is one of the things I object to in what—rather vaguely—he is trying to do.'

In October of that year Turgenev tried to comfort Herzen after the failure of his attempt to revive *The Bell* in Paris. 'I advise you', Turgenev wrote, 'not to lose courage. Many times in my life have I had occasion to recall what an old peasant once said to me: If a man does not destroy himself, no one can destroy him. So don't destroy yourself.' That was Turgenev's last letter to Herzen. They met in Paris in January 1870, and had lunch together. In the evening Herzen fell ill. Next day he developed pneumonia, and he died a few days later. 'Whatever differences we may have had,' Turgenev wrote to Annenkov, 'and whatever the conflicts we may have been engaged in, Herzen was still an old comrade—and an old friend has disappeared: our ranks are getting thinner and thinner!'

When Panayev died in 1862, Turgenev also felt that a link with his past had snapped. 'I am sorry for him,' he wrote to Fet, 'not because of what he might have done or for what he had already done. I am sorry for a comrade of my youth.' Druzhinin died in January 1864. 'Death', Turgenev wrote to Pauline Viardot at the time, 'is a big and terrible thing, and if she could hear what one said to her, I should implore her to let me stay a little longer on earth, for I want to see you again and for a long time, if possible.' When Botkin died in Petersburg, after a long illness, in October 1869, Turgenev wrote to Annenkov: 'Not for a long time has a man died who was capable of enjoying life so much; it was a sort of talent; but pitiless fate does not spare even talents. A comrade fewer! He dealt fairly with his brothers, etc., but our poor society [the Russian Literary Fund] has remained an unworthy object in his eyes. This son of a Moscow merchant had quite extraordinary retrograde instincts and prejudices. No better than any Prussian

Baden-Baden

Junker or an army general of the time of Nicholas I. . . . Literature alone was capable of arousing something that resembled revolt in him.'

By the end of the Baden-Baden period only two intimate friends remained to Turgenev: Annenkov and Polonsky. But by that time he had acquired another intimate friend in France—Gustave Flaubert.

4

In spite of his close association with France, Turgenev had hitherto stood aloof from the French literary circles. At the end of the sixties, as at the end of the fifties, he found little to admire in contemporary French letters, or indeed in French literature as a whole. 'Like the Romans whom they look upon as their predecessors,' he wrote in 1869 in his introduction to the Russian translation of one of Du Camp's novels, 'the French are only poorly endowed with poetic faculties. A Frenchman has a sharp and nimble intelligence, but his imagination is dull and paltry; on the other hand, his powers of discrimination are highly developed; a Frenchman's taste is subtle and true, especially in negation, but somehow he feels life's truth and simplicity dimly and superficially; in beauty he first of all looks for prettiness, and for all his physical and moral courage, he is timid and irresolute in the matter of poetic invention—or, like Victor Hugo in his last works, consciously and obstinately stands on his head. In short, the French seem to be able to do without truth in art as easily as without freedom in social life.' (This was written two years before the fall of the régime of Louis Napoleon which Turgenev abhorred.) Of all the contemporary French novels, he singled out Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* as 'undoubtedly the most remarkable work of the new French school'. It was on 23 January 1863, shortly before he left Paris for Baden-Baden, that he was introduced for the first time to a gathering of French writers at the famous literary dinners at the Restaurant Magny. Edmund de Goncourt left a description of it in his diary. His highly romanticised and often quoted description of Turgenev as 'a charming colossus, a gentle giant with white hair and the air of a forest or mountain spirit' must have been added much later, since

Baden-Baden

at the time Turgenev's hair was far from white (Ludwig Pietsch, who met him in Paris a few weeks later, described his hair as '*leicht ergraut*'—streaked with grey). It was at that dinner that Turgenev met Gustave Flaubert for the first time. They seem to have taken to each other at once, though it was not till eight years later that they became intimate friends. A week after the meeting, Turgenev sent Flaubert two volumes of his short stories and invited him to his flat at 210, rue de Rivoli, where he wanted to introduce him to Pauline Viardot. But Flaubert was not able to come. From his old house at Croisset, however, he sent Turgenev a warm appreciation of his genius, which was certainly a change from the abuse showered upon him by his own countrymen.

*'Depuis longtemps', Flaubert wrote on 16 March 1863 'vous êtes pour moi un maître. Mais plus je vous étudie, plus votre talent me tient ébahissement. J'admire cette manière à la fois véhémence et contenue, cette sympathie qui descend jusqu' aux êtres les plus infâmes et donne une pensée aux paysages. On voit et on rêve. . . . Il s'exhale de vos œuvres un parfum âcre et doux, une tristesse charmante, qui me pénètre jusqu' au fond de l' âme. . . . Quelle art vous avez! Quel mélange d' attendrissement, d' ironie, d' observation et de couleur! Et comme tout cela est combiné! Comme vous amenez vos effets! Quelle sûreté de main! Tout en étant particulier, vous êtes général. Que de choses senties par moi, éprouvées, n' ai-je pas retrouvées chez vous! . . . Mais ce qu' on n' a pas assez loué en vous, c' est le cœur, c' est-à-dire une émotion permanente, je ne sais quelle sensibilité profonde et cachée.'*¹

In his reply, Turgenev declared that Flaubert's letter made him blush and gave him pleasure at the same time. He sent him another

¹ For a long time I have regarded you as my master. But the more I study you, the more does your talent keep me enthralled. I admire that manner of yours, at once vehement and restrained, that sympathy which reaches down to the most infamous people and imbues the landscapes with thought. One sees and one dreams. . . . Your works exhale a bitter-sweet perfume, a charming sadness, which penetrates to the very depth of my soul. . . . How wonderful your art is! What a mixture of tenderness, irony, observation and colour! And how exquisitely all this is combined! How admirably you achieve your effects! What a sureness of the hand! While being particular, you are also general. How many things I have felt and experienced have I found in your works! . . . But what one has not sufficiently praised in you, is the heart, that is to say, a permanent emotion, and I don't know how profound and hidden a sensibility.

volume of his stories and promised to send him a fourth as soon as it was published. 'I am happy', he wrote, 'to continue an acquaintance which began under such favourable auspices and which, for my part, I hope will develop into a true friendship.' Flaubert replied a few days later, having by then read the third volume of Turgenev's works, which included a translation of *First Love*. What he admired most of all about Turgenev's talent, Flaubert declared, was its *distinction*—'*chose suprême*'. Turgenev, in his view, had found the way of being true without being banal, of being sentimental without being affected, and comic without being debased. 'Without attempting a *coup de théâtre*,' he wrote, 'you obtain your tragic effects by the very *ending* of your composition. You give one the impression of a very good-natured man, but you are a very powerful one. "The skin of a fox grafted on to that of a lion," as Montaigne has said.' As for *First Love*, Flaubert wrote: 'All the old romantics (and I am one of them, I who have slept with my head on a dagger) ought to be grateful to you for that little tale which says so much about the days of their youth. What an exciting girl that Zinochka is! It is one of your great qualities that you know how to create women. They are real and ideal at one and the same time. They possess both physical attraction and a halo. . . .' He, too, concluded by expressing the hope that their sympathy for each other would grow into friendship. 'I am counting on that,' he wrote, 'and I am sure of that.' But it was not to be for some time yet. Turgenev went to live in Baden-Baden, and Flaubert would not leave France. Five years later they resumed their correspondence. But it was not till November 1868 that Turgenev paid his first visit to Croisset. Flaubert read him extracts from his *Éducation Sentimentale*, the novel he was just then writing. 'If your novel', Turgenev wrote to him from Paris, 'is as powerful as the fragments you have read to me, then it will be a masterpiece.' He added, however: 'Find another title for it: *Éducation sentimentale* is bad.' Their formal '*Cher Monsieur*' had by then become '*Mon cher ami*' and within a few more years it was to become '*Mon bon cher vieux*'. They met again in Paris at Easter 1869. Flaubert's *Éducation sentimentale* had had a very bad reception and Turgenev, who was more used to unfavourable criticism than Flaubert, did his best to comfort him. '*Je vous*

Baden-Baden

embrasse', he wrote to him from Weimar on 20 February 1870, '*et vous dis: Courage! Vous êtes Flaubert, après tout!*' The Franco-Prussian war interrupted their correspondence for a time.

Except for a few meetings with Prosper Mérimée, who translated *Phantoms* and *The Dog* and went over the French translation of *Smoke*, Turgenev made no new friends among the French writers during his Baden-Baden period.

But while there was very little that could evoke his admiration in French contemporary literature, it was during this period that Russian literature produced some of its greatest masterpieces. Turgenev found the first part of *Crime and Punishment* 'remarkable', but he objected to the second part for its 'fusty analytical hairsplitting'. His attitude to Dostoevsky had never quite dissociated itself from the impressions of his first encounters with him and he always looked upon him as a morbid and mentally unstable character. But it would be a mistake to suppose that Turgenev did not appreciate the greatness of Dostoevsky's genius. He read *The House of the Dead*, he told Dostoevsky, 'with great pleasure. The picture of the *bath-house*, especially,' he wrote to him on 7 January 1862, 'is simply Dantesque, and in your characterisation of the different people (for example, Petrov) there is a great deal of subtle and true psychological insight.' It was Tolstoy's genius, however, that he was always ready to acclaim. During the seventeen years of their estrangement, he never missed an opportunity to proclaim Tolstoy as the greatest writer of the day. *The Cossacks* delighted him; *Polikushka* made him again marvel at the strength of Tolstoy's genius. 'A master—a master!' he wrote to Fet. He waited eagerly for the publication of each part of *War and Peace*, and though he found many things to criticise in the great novel, such as the abundance of minor details, the fact that there was 'no development in a single character', and 'the over subtle reflections and observations of one's own feelings', he felt that it was 'full of things no other writer in Europe except Tolstoy could have written, things that aroused in me', he wrote to Annenkov on 26 February 1868, 'an unbounded admiration'. With the publication of *War and Peace*, he wrote to Borisov a few weeks later, Tolstoy occupied the first place among all Russian contemporary writers. 'Tolstoy's novel', he wrote to Polonsky on 6 March 1868,

'is a marvellous thing: but the weakest thing in it is just what the reading public finds so delightful: its historical side and—its psychology. His history is just a trick, an attempt to mislead the reader by subtle details; his psychology is a capriciously monotonous preoccupation with one and the same feeling. Everything dealing with life, all descriptive passages and all military matters are, on the other hand, first-class, and a master like Tolstoy we do not possess.' His final criticism of *War and Peace* concerned what he called its 'childish philosophy'. After reading the last part of the novel, he wrote to Borisov from Weimar on 27 March 1870 that without even mentioning its 'childish philosophy', he was irritated to see 'the reflection of a *system* even in Tolstoy's characters. Why', he went on, 'are all the good women in his novel females—even fools? And why does he try to persuade the reader that if a woman is educated and intelligent she must needs be a phrasemonger and a liar? . . . Why are all the decent people in the novel sort of block-heads—with a little admixture of feeble-mindedness? I fear that the Slavophil movement, into whose hands he seems to have fallen, may spoil his wonderful poetic talent by depriving him of his freedom of opinion. . . . An artist who is incapable of seeing the *white* and the *black*—of looking both to the right and to the left—already stands on the brink of perdition.'

As for *The Precipice*, Goncharov's last long novel, which had already caused Turgenev so much trouble, he found it written 'by a civil servant for civil servants and their wives'. The whole thing was *invented*, all the characters were commonplace, 'and Goncharov himself', he wrote to Annenkov on 26 February 1869, 'is a sort of god, emperor and poet of the commonplace.'

It was during the Baden-Baden period that Turgenev met his English translator W. R. S. Ralston. He received a letter from Ralston in October 1866, and replied at once. 'I should like to ask your permission,' he wrote, 'to reply in French; I know English literature well and I speak English fluently, but I should find it difficult to write in your language. . . . I am very glad', he went on, 'that you want to acquaint your fellow-countrymen with our literature. Without mentioning Gogol, I think that the works of Count Leo Tolstoy, Ostrovsky, Pissemsky and Goncharov ought to interest the English reader both because of their manner of

Baden-Baden

perception and their transmission of poetic impressions. It cannot be denied that since Gogol our literature has assumed an original character; it would be interesting to find out whether this originality has become sufficiently apparent to arouse the interest of other nations in it.'

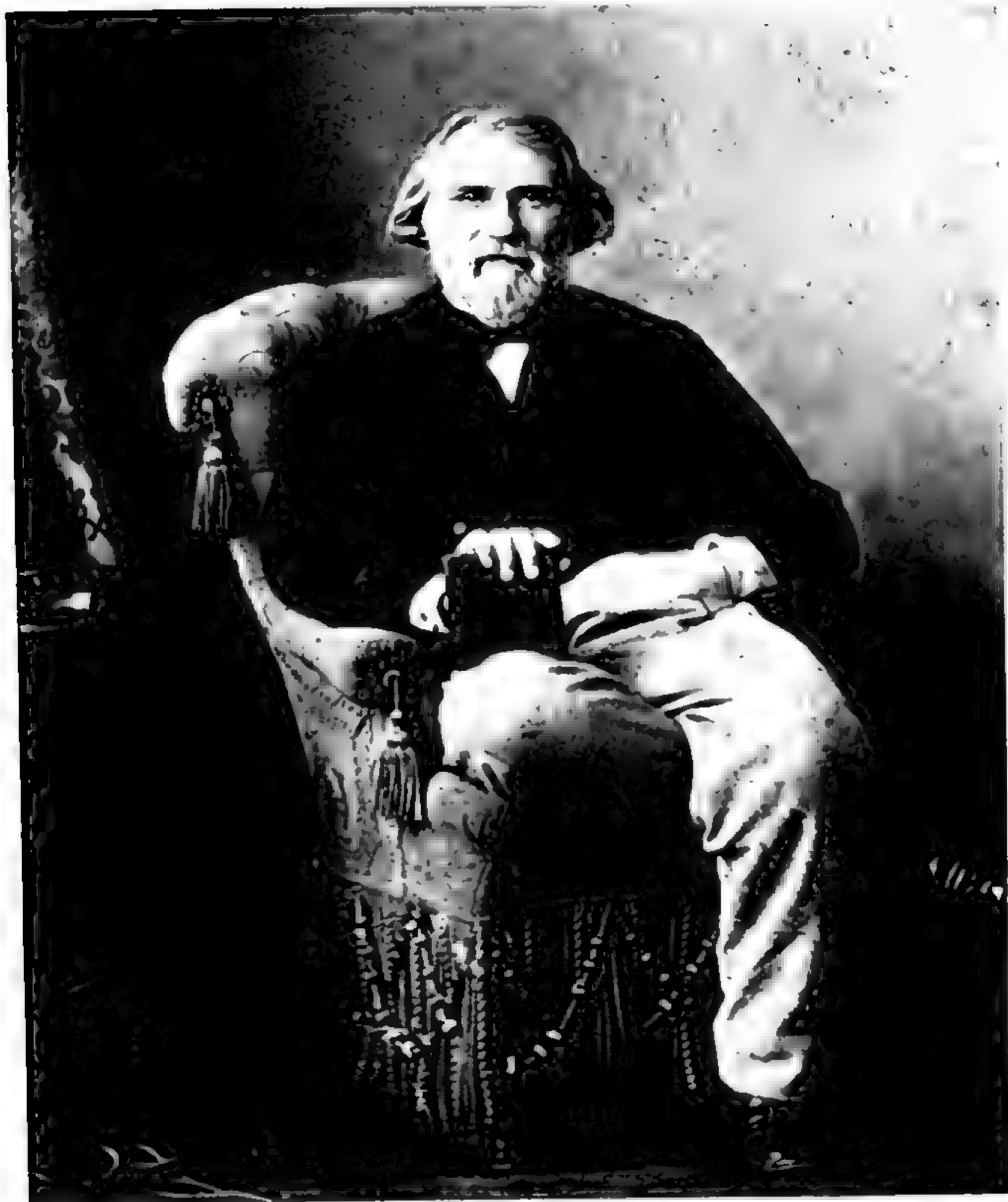
5

Smoke, Turgenev's only novel during the eight years of his life in Baden-Baden, reflects his general feeling of pessimism and that is, perhaps, the main reason why it is not generally appreciated for the fine work of art which it is. Its main theme—that everything in the world and, particularly, in Russia as well as everything a man does is just a puff of smoke which disappears without a trace and without achieving anything—conforms to the mood of his other works of the same period. But the novel also expresses his disappointment with the unfulfilled hopes of the great reform he had fought for all his life. The emancipation of the serfs had not solved the agrarian problem. The peasants, as Annenkov told Turgenev at the time, had not joined in the general rejoicings. So far as they were concerned, it was war and not peace. On his return to Russia in 1861 Turgenev could convince himself of the truth of that statement: his former serfs, that is those he had not succeeded in turning into leaseholders, refused to accept his terms. Like the rest of the freed peasants, they were expecting the government to distribute the land of their former owners among them free. Soon the cry 'Land and Liberty' became the slogan of the most revolutionary party in the country, which was to become responsible for a series of political assassinations.

'Do you really imagine that I do not see through our Russian peasants?' Turgenev wrote to Countess Lambert a few months after the publication of the manifesto liberating the serfs. 'A people without education (and I use this word in its *civil* and not its learned or literary sense) must be bad in spite of its cunning and subtlety. It is, therefore, necessary, on the one hand, to arm oneself with patience and, on the other, to teach them. . . . But our far-sighted government imposes a tax of fifty roubles on the students!! *Quos vult perdere, Jupiter dementat.*' His own plan for the universal

elementary education of the peasants had been utterly ignored, and with the outbreak of the student disturbances, the Petersburg fires and the general unrest throughout the country, the authorities closed down all the Sunday schools and the rest of the existing elementary schools. It is true, he opened his own village school in Spasskoye in 1863 and erected a new building for it six years later, but that was only a drop in the ocean. Reaction on the one hand and a utopian revolutionary movement based on the old Slavophil idea of reviving the ancient Russian agricultural communes on the other—the whole thing seemed hopeless to Turgenev. *Smoke* was his challenge to both the reactionary nobility, personified by the group of generals, and to the revolutionary leaders, personified by Gubaryov, 'a Slavophil, a Socialist, a democrat and anything you like', as Potugin, Turgenev's mouthpiece, characterises him.

Turgenev first conceived the plan of his new novel in 1862 when he compiled the list of its characters. On the margin he put the initials of their prototypes. Thus, against Gubaryov's name he put an O, which makes it pretty certain that he had in mind Herzen's right hand-man, the poet Ogaryov, whom he particularly disliked and whom he accused of being responsible for ruining Herzen's journal *The Bell*. Irene, the *femme fatale*, was a famous Petersburg beauty and a former mistress of Alexander II, and her husband, Peter Albedinsky, is the General Ratmirov of the novel. The other characters, too, are all based on well-known people, the heroine Tatyana Shestov, as already mentioned, being Olga Turgenev, the girl he had nearly married about ten years earlier. He next referred to the novel in a letter to Countess Lambert in July 1863, in which he told her that he had not yet begun writing it. By the autumn of 1865 the general outline of the novel had already been worked out and he discussed it with Botkin. He began writing it on 18 November 1865, and finished it on 29 January 1866. He left for Russia at the end of February and during the first week of April handed it to Katkov for publication in the *Russian Herald*. Katkov was very worried by the fact that Turgenev had made no attempt to disguise the identity of Irene and her husband, and he demanded a number of alterations of a more drastic kind. 'Katkov', Turgenev wrote to Pauline Viardot on 9 April, 'insists on my making Irene into a virtuous matron and the generals and the other gentlemen into



Ivan Turgenev, aged 44



Bougival: View of Turgenev's Chalet

Baden-Baden

exemplary citizens. I have made a few concessions, but today I cried, Halt! We shall see who wins in the end. For my part, I have made up my mind not to alter a single comma. Artists, too, must have a conscience and I do not want mine to reproach me.' However, he did agree to cut out one scene, 'an unimportant one', he told Pauline Viardot. 'Here you have the reverse of the medal in literature,' he went on. 'However, one must comfort oneself with the thought that it could have been worse and that I shall get my 2,000 roubles.'

The novel was published in the March issue of the *Russian Herald* and, as might have been expected, provoked a storm of indignation. The poet Tyutchev, Botkin informed Turgenev who had in the meantime returned to Baden-Baden, was complaining bitterly of the moral atmosphere of the novel and the total absence of patriotic feelings. He even wrote two poems deploring Turgenev's fall from grace. 'My novel', Turgenev wrote to Herzen in May 1867, 'has roused religious people, Slavophiles and patriots in Russia against me.' A few days later he wrote to the brilliant young critic Dmitry Pisarev, who led the movement in favour of the natural sciences and had taken up the cudgels in defence of Bazarov, that *Smoke* had aroused hatred and contempt against him in the majority of Russian readers. 'I am glad', he told the same correspondent a few weeks later, 'I have succeeded in nailing the banner with the word "civilisation" to my mast. Let them fling mud at it. *Si etiam omnes, ego non* [even if all are like that, I am not].' It was Potugin, Turgenev's mouthpiece in the novel, who was the cause of so much gnashing of teeth. Potugin, like Turgenev, is an out and out Westerner. 'I am devoted to Europe,' Turgenev-Potugin says, 'that is, to put it more precisely, I am devoted to—civilisation. I love it with all my heart. I believe in it, and I have no other faith. This word ci-vi-li-sa-tion is comprehensible, pure and sacred, and the others, such as nationality, glory and so on, smell of blood. Away with them!' As for the Russian national character, Turgenev-Potugin was quite outspoken about it. 'The government', he says, 'have delivered us from serfdom and we all thank them for it; but the habits of slavery are too deeply implanted in us. We must have a master in everything and everywhere; this master is mostly a living person, but sometimes a so-called movement gets the upper

hand of us—now, for instance, we have all become slaves of the natural sciences. Why and on the strength of what reasons we become slaves is a mystery, but such, it seems, is our nature. The main thing is that we should have a master. . . . When a new master appears, the old one is chucked out. . . .’ Herzen, not surprisingly, strongly objected to Potugin’s ideas and he told Turgenev that the novel would have gained greatly in effectiveness if half of his speeches were cut out. But Turgenev did not agree. ‘I find’, he wrote to Herzen on 22 May 1867, ‘that he does not say enough, and I am confirmed in my opinion by the fury which this character has aroused against me. Joseph II told Mozart that he had too many notes: “*Keine zu viel*”, Mozart replied. I, too, make bold to say that there is *kein Wort zuviel* [not a word too many]. What in Europe is considered a platitude, can still infuriate people in Russia by its novelty.’ His final summing up of the storm produced by his novel is contained in his letter to Herzen of 4 June 1867: ‘Everybody is cursing me,’ he wrote, ‘the reds and the whites, from above, from below and from the sides, especially from the sides. . . . But somehow, I don’t care, and not because I think that I am infallible, but for no reason at all—like water off a duck’s back.’

6

However much Turgenev pretended to be indifferent, there can be no doubt that he was bewildered and hurt by the violent attacks in the Russian press on a novel he considered ‘the only sensible and useful thing’ he had written. It was certainly unfortunate that his meeting with Dostoevsky, which ended in their final break, should have occurred just then. It was no less unfortunate that Dostoevsky, too, should have visited Turgenev at a time when his affairs were in such a hopeless state that his deep-seated resentment against the ‘lazy Baden-Baden bourgeois’ (as Turgenev unwisely described himself in a letter to Dostoevsky) should have got the better of him and made him exult over what he believed to be the final discomfiture of his old enemy.

Their relations after Dostoevsky’s return from Siberia in 1859 had never been very close. They were based on the hope of mutual advantage. Turgenev had only reluctantly turned to Katkov after

Baden-Baden

his break with Nekrasov. He was looking out for a periodical in which he could publish his works without compromising his political convictions. Dostoevsky's monthly, *Time*, the first number of which was published in January 1861, seemed to him to be sufficiently moderate to be worth considering as an alternative to Katkov's *Russian Herald* at a time when the left-wing periodicals were conducting a bitter campaign against him. When, therefore, Dostoevsky approached him with an offer to publish his works in *Time*, he gladly accepted it and even promised not to publish anything in any other periodical. Meantime, Dostoevsky went out of his way to declare his admiration for Turgenev. His praise of *Fathers and Sons* may not have been due entirely to selfish motives, since he was glad of the opportunity the novel had given him to attack 'utilitarians' like Chernyshevsky. But there can be little doubt that his extravagant protestations of friendship in his letters were far from sincere. When *Time* was closed down in May 1863, Dostoevsky went on bombarding Turgenev with letters in which he begged him not to publish *Phantoms*, which he had promised to *Time*, elsewhere as he had good hopes of obtaining permission to issue another periodical. In September 1863, he went to see Turgenev in Baden-Baden to secure *Phantoms* for his second periodical *Epoch*. His description of the visit in a letter to his brother leaves no doubt as to his real feelings towards Turgenev. 'In Baden,' he wrote to his brother from Turin on 20 September, 'I saw Turgenev. I called on him twice and he called on me once. He is very depressed, though recovered from his illness [in January 1863 Turgenev had imagined that he was suffering from a weak heart. A French specialist diagnosed an organic disease of the heart of long standing, a diagnosis that proved to be utterly wrong, but that shocked Turgenev and made him brood over his 'incurable illness' for many months]. He lives with his daughter. He told me about his moral sufferings and doubts, philosophic doubts which have become of vital importance to him. He is partly a fop. I did not conceal my gambling from him. He gave me *Phantoms* to read, but I was too busy at the tables and I returned it to him unread. He said he wrote it for our journal and that if I write to him from Rome he will send it on to me. But what do I know of our journal?' His brother accused him of having made a terrible blunder in

returning the manuscript of the story to Turgenev. 'Do you realise', he wrote, 'what Turgenev means to us *now*? To start our journal with a story by Turgenev—why, it means certain success!' Dostoevsky at once wrote to Turgenev to ask him to send *Phantoms* to Petersburg 'immediately'. 'Your story in the November issue of our journal', he wrote, 'is of enormous importance to us. I am terribly vexed with myself,' he went on to offer a lame apology for his churlish behaviour at Baden-Baden, 'for already in Petersburg I made up my mind to visit you in Baden not for the reason I went there, but to see you and have a talk with you. And, you know, I really had a great deal to say to you and I was anxious to hear what you have to say to me, too. But, somehow, nothing came of it. And, besides, "the tumult of passions" [i.e. his passion for gambling] was too much for me! If I did not hope to do something more intelligent in future, I should really have been thoroughly ashamed of myself now. But then what am I to do? I can't very well ask myself for forgiveness, can I?'

The same hypocritical attitude is apparent in Dostoevsky's extravagant praises of *Phantoms* in his letters to Turgenev and his contemptuous reference to it in a letter to his brother. To Turgenev he wrote that his fantastic story was a bold step and 'an excellent example' to them all and that only fools would not be impressed by it. The 'form' of the story was excellent and its 'tone' was wonderful—'a tone of tender sadness without any special malice'. To his brother he described Turgenev's story as 'nasty, morbid, senile, *unbelieving* from sheer impotence, in a word, the whole of Turgenev with his convictions,' though he did reluctantly admit that 'its poetry will redeem a lot'. The story was published in March 1864 in the first issue of *Epoch*. In April Dostoevsky's brother died, and for the next four months Dostoevsky worked hard to keep the journal going, all the time writing pathetic letters to Turgenev in which he begged him not to withdraw his support from *Epoch*. 'If you can continue to support our journal,' he wrote to Turgenev on 20 September 1864 (O.S.), 'the public will at last realise that it is in good hands. That is why I do not want to conceal from you how much your participation means to us. Write to me, Ivan Sergeyevich, I beg you, and let me know whether you can promise your first story or novel to us. . . . If you support us, you will not regret

Baden-Baden

it.' In December he sent Turgenev another S.O.S.: 'Please, support our journal, Ivan Sergeyevich!' In February 1865, he upbraided Turgenev for his unwillingness to publish his story *The Dog* and assured him that no story of his, however insignificant, could harm his literary reputation. He signed his letter: 'Yours devotedly.' *Epoch* expired at last in March 1865, leaving Dostoevsky with a heap of debts which it took him his whole life to pay off. His next letter to Turgenev was also an S.O.S., though of a different kind. To escape his creditors he had fled abroad, and on 15 August he wrote to Turgenev from Wiesbaden: 'The day before yesterday I won 12,000 francs in one hour. Though I did not intend even now to try to improve my financial situation by gambling, I did like the idea of winning at least 1,000 francs to see me through the next three months. I've been in Wiesbaden for five days and have lost everything to the last penny—my watch and all—and I even owe money to the hotel. I am loath and ashamed to worry you with my troubles, but I have no one except you to turn to at this moment, particularly as you are so much more understanding than the rest. This makes it morally easier for me to approach you and to ask you to lend me 100 thalers. . . . It goes without saying that I shall repay you within three weeks if not earlier—in a month at the latest. I feel awful (I thought it would be worse), and the main thing is that I am ashamed to trouble you; but when a man is drowning, what is he to do?'

Turgenev, who was in difficulties himself (he had to borrow money from a moneylender for his daughter's dowry), sent Dostoevsky 50 thalers, which Dostoevsky repaid only ten years later.

It was this unpaid debt that was largely responsible for the unfortunate meeting between Dostoevsky and Turgenev in Baden-Baden on 10 July 1867. Dostoevsky had again to run away abroad to escape his creditors, this time with his eighteen-year-old second wife, Anna. He arrived in Baden-Baden on 4 July. He had previously been to Hamburg where he lost a great deal of money at roulette. In Baden-Baden he lost the rest. A short time earlier he had learnt that his young wife was expecting a baby. He was in such a state of nervous tension that he anticipated a recurrence of his epileptic fits. Goncharov, who was also in Baden-Baden at the

time, met him and his wife in the street and told them that Turgenev had seen Dostoevsky at the Casino. Dostoevsky felt, as Anna put it in her diary, that if he did not call on Turgenev, he might be suspected of avoiding him because he was afraid he be asked to repay his debt. That seemed to worry him most and forced him at last to visit Turgenev. There are two versions of what happened at the meeting; one left by Dostoevsky himself in a letter to the poet Maykov written in Geneva on 28 August, and another left by Anna who had written it down in the shorthand diary she kept on the very day of the meeting. Both are highly dramatised accounts and both agree that Dostoevsky had gone to see Turgenev with the intention of provoking him in the crudest possible way by exulting over the failure of *Smoke*. Anna records Dostoevsky as telling her that he spoke to Turgenev 'mostly in a humorous way' and that that made Turgenev very angry. She adds that 'as usual, Fedya [i.e. Dostoevsky] spoke harshly to him and told him clearly that his novel was a failure'. Oddly enough, she does not mention Dostoevsky's assertion in his letter to Maykov that Turgenev has declared that he was an 'out and out' atheist. Instead she records that what Turgenev said was 'that he was a realist, but Fedya said that it only seemed to him to be so'. Both accounts also agree about Dostoevsky's taunting Turgenev for his long absence from Russia and advising him to buy a telescope in order to see from Baden-Baden what was happening in Russia. Again, both accounts mention the fact that certain members of the English Club in Petersburg wanted to exclude Turgenev from membership as a protest against *Smoke*. Characteristic, too, is Dostoevsky's claim that Turgenev abused Russia and the Russians in the vilest terms and that he declared that he was a German more than a Russian.

Turgenev returned Dostoevsky's visit next day. He arrived at ten o'clock and, finding that Dostoevsky was still in bed, left his card. Dostoevsky later accused him of having done it purposely as he had warned him that he never received visitors before twelve. They met again at the railway station, but ignored each other.

In his letter to Maykov, Dostoevsky does not disguise the fact that he had always hated Turgenev. 'I went to see Turgenev at twelve o'clock,' he wrote, 'and I found him having lunch. I will tell you frankly: I never liked this man personally. The thing

Baden-Baden

that worried me was that I had owed him 50 thalers since 1865 (and I have not repaid it yet!). I don't like his aristocratic-pharisaical embrace and the way with which he goes to kiss you but only holds out his cheek to you. The horrible arrogance of the man!' Turgenev, of course, was merely greeting Dostoevsky in the accepted French manner and for Dostoevsky to accuse him of arrogance merely accentuates his own well known morbid touchiness. 'Perhaps', Dostoevsky concluded his letter to Maykov, as though realising himself that he had laid it on a bit too thick, 'the malicious joy with which I describe Turgenev and how we insulted each other will strike you as unpleasant, but I simply hadn't the strength (to contain myself): he insulted me too much by his convictions. Personally, I don't care a rap, though he is not particularly attractive with those aristocratic manners of his; but, after all, it is impossible to listen to such abuse of Russia from a Russian traitor who might have been useful. His crawling before the Germans and his hatred of Russia I noticed a long time ago—already four years ago¹—but his present irritation and frenzied foaming at the mouth against Russia have been caused solely by the failure of *Smoke* and by the fact that Russia dared not to acclaim him as a genius. It is only his vanity, and that is what makes it all the more disgusting. But to hell with him!'

Dostoevsky, however, was not satisfied with pouring out his hatred of Turgenev in a private letter. A month later Peter Bartenev, the editor of *Russian Archives*, received a transcript of the portion of Dostoevsky's letter to Maykov which described his meeting with Turgenev in Baden-Baden and his comments on it, together with an anonymous note in which he was asked to deposit it in one of the Petersburg libraries till 1890 when it was to be published 'for posterity'. Bartenev told Annenkov about it and Annenkov at

¹ It is interesting to compare this statement with a statement made by Nicholas Strakhov, the literary critic who was one of Dostoevsky's closest friends. In 1862, according to Strakhov, Turgenev invited Dostoevsky and the other contributors of *Time* to a dinner at his hotel in Petersburg. During this dinner Turgenev, far from 'crawling before the Germans', as Dostoevsky put it, spoke 'with artistic picturesqueness of the base and cunning tricks foreigners played to fleece Russian tourists. . . . I recalled this conversation many times afterwards,' Strakhov concludes, 'and I was sorry that these observations as well as many others Turgenev had collected during his long sojourns abroad remained untold in print.'

once communicated with Turgenev. 'You have surprised me with the news about the letter (that it comes from Dostoevsky I have no doubt at all),' Turgenev wrote to Annenkov on 22 December 1867 (O.S.). 'After this I shall certainly enjoy visits from my fellow-countrymen! What a nice fellow he is! I am enclosing a letter to Bartenev which I should like you to send on to him. Take a copy of the letter to Bartenev and don't be afraid to show it to anyone you like.'

In his letter to Bartenev, Turgenev, after describing Dostoevsky's accusations against him as 'scandalous and absurd', wrote: 'The opinions, which are claimed to be my deep convictions, were, according to Mr. Dostoevsky, expressed by me in his presence last summer in Baden-Baden during the only visit he honoured me with. Apart altogether from the question whether such a misuse of confidence can be justified or not, I think it only right to state that I should have considered it highly improper to express my deep convictions to Mr. Dostoevsky if only because I regard him as a man who, as a result of his nervous attacks and for other reasons, is not in complete possession of his mental faculties; this opinion, I may say, is shared by many other people. He spent no more than an hour at my place and, after relieving his mind by wild abuse of the Germans, myself and my book, went away. I have had neither the time nor the desire to reply to him: I repeat, I treated him like a sick man. I should not be surprised if in his diseased mind he imagined the arguments he expected to hear from me and then wrote his—denunciation.'

When in 1871 Dostoevsky published his malicious skit on Turgenev in *The Devils*, Turgenev wrote to Polonsky from London on 6 May: 'I am told that Dostoevsky has lampooned me—well, let him enjoy himself. He came to see me five years ago in Baden-Baden not to pay me back the money he owed me but to abuse me—for *Smoke*, which in his opinion should have been burnt by the public hangman. I listened to his philippic in silence, and what do I find? That I had expressed all sorts of criminal opinions which he hastened to send on to Bartenev. That would have been just a libel if Dostoevsky had not been a madman—which I do not doubt he is. Perhaps he imagined it all.' But it was only after reading *The Devils* that Turgenev realised that Dostoevsky's

intentions were not as innocent as he had at first supposed. 'Dostoevsky's action', he wrote to a correspondent on 15 December 1872, 'did not surprise me in the least; he had conceived a hatred for me when we were both young and beginning our literary careers, though I did nothing to deserve it. But passions which are without reason are said to be the strongest and the most lasting. Dostoevsky', he went on, 'permitted himself something more than a parody; in *The Devils* he presented me under the name of Karmazinov¹ as sympathising with the party of Nechayev.² It is strange, though, that for his parody he should have chosen the only story I published in a periodical he had edited and for which he had showered grateful and appreciative letters on me. I have kept those letters and it would be amusing to publish them! But he knows that I would not do that. I can only express my regret that he should use his undoubted gifts for the satisfaction of such contemptible feelings: he seems to esteem them lightly if he uses them for writing lampoons.'

Turgenev and Dostoevsky met twice during the next eight years, but they never corresponded again. Turgenev did write a courteous letter to him in March 1877, 'in spite', as he expressed it, 'of the misunderstandings that have arisen between us and as a result of which our personal relations have come to an end.' But it was only a letter of introduction he gave to Durand-Greville, the French critic and translator of his works. Dostoevsky did not reply.

7

Turgenev realised very well that as a writer who drew his inspiration direct from life, his absence from Russia must have a deleterious effect on his work. In his letters to his friends he repeatedly dwelt on that fact. 'I am getting more and more convinced', he wrote to a correspondent on 17 June 1870, from Spasskoye, 'that it is almost impossible to write Russian stories while living abroad—*die Fuehlung* is lost.' On the other hand, he claimed that there was no need for a writer to live in his country perman-

¹ The name of Karmazinov is usually derived from the French word *cramoisi*—crimson; that is, a man who is in sympathy with the 'reds'.

² Nechayev was the organiser of a revolutionary terrorist organisation and was convicted of the murder of a Moscow student, a member of his own 'group of five', whom he suspected of betrayal.

ently in order to be able to detect the changes in the lives of the people he was interested in as raw material for his stories and novels. 'I see no reason why I should not settle in Baden-Baden,' he wrote to Countess Lambert in September 1864. 'I don't do it out of a desire for enjoyment, but simply in order to make a little home for myself where I can wait for the inevitable end.' Countess Lambert, who had realised that his reconciliation with Pauline Viardot meant the end of their friendship, had written him a farewell letter in which she complained about his 'lack of orthodoxy' (a reference to the fact that he had allowed his daughter to be converted to Catholicism before her marriage) and his unwillingness 'to serve his country'. The first point he did not want to discuss. 'I am not a Christian in your sense,' he wrote in reply, 'and perhaps not in any sense.' As for her second point, he admitted that serving one's country was an excellent thing. 'But', he went on, 'you will agree that I cannot serve it as a soldier, nor as a civil servant, nor as an agronomist, nor as an industrialist: I can only be of use to it as an artist, and as an artist I might like to do something that has no connection with Russia.' But there was never any question of his severing his links with Russia, though he did feel at times that he was 'a cut-off limb'.

During the eight years of his life in Baden-Baden he paid five visits to Russia. He answered the summons to appear before the Senate in 1864; he spent a few weeks at Spasskoye in 1865; he went to Russia again in 1867 to instal a new manager of his estates in place of his ageing and pig-headed old uncle who had practically ruined him, and he was there again in 1868 and 1870. His parting with his uncle was a stormy one. Turgenev hated scenes of any kind because he knew that he was liable to get excited and do things he would be sorry for afterwards. He did set out for Spasskoye from Moscow on 26 March 1867, but caught a cold (or so he claimed) on the way and returned without seeing his uncle, who went on writing indignant letters to him, calling him 'an assassin'. The whole thing ended most unpleasantly for Turgenev: his uncle presented the two promissory notes he had given him years before and threatened to sell Spasskoye and distrain on his property, that is, his new house in Baden-Baden, forcing him to make it over to the Viardots. It was, as Turgenev put it, 'a climacteric year,' full

Baden-Baden

of all sorts of omens of disaster, such as, for instance, that his next birthday fell on a Monday, the day on which he was born, that New Year's day was also on a Monday, that he was to be fifty, and that it would be the twenty-fifth anniversary of his meeting with Pauline Viardot. This sort of juggling with dates and figures fascinated and at the same time horrified Turgenev. It was uncanny; it took him back to his early childhood when his mother and father, and everybody else for that matter, believed in such 'evil omens'. It pressed some hidden trigger in his mind which released all sorts of dark forces against which his reason battled in vain. The events of 1867 seemed to lend substance to his fears. In the spring of that year he had one of his violent attacks of gout; and the weather, too, was unusually severe. 'If only I could reproach myself with the least act of imprudence,' he wrote to Pauline Viardot from Moscow on 6 April. 'But there was nothing—I've been leading a most exemplary life, the life of an ascetic, of St. John the Baptist and—bang! an attack of gout—*Oh, vilaine, vilaine année climatérique!*' He had promised to give a few public readings of his works, but he had to postpone them: a blizzard was raging in Moscow, Katkov was being difficult about *Smoke*, and his maniac of an uncle was still calling down the vengeance of heaven upon his head. However, his reading, when he did give it at last, was a great success—he read a few extracts from *Smoke*—the hall was packed and he was applauded and complimented on all sides. 'All this', he wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'gave me great pleasure, and I feel all the more pleased to be able to tell you of it.' During that visit to Moscow he also made arrangements for the publication of a new edition of his works and undertook to write his literary reminiscences for it.

A year later there was famine in Russia and the impression the country made on him was disastrous. 'It seems to me', he wrote to Pauline Viardot on 25 June, 'that I have never before seen such ruined and dilapidated cottages, such wan and emaciated faces, and anything so terribly sad. Public houses everywhere and such hopeless misery! Spasskoye is the only village I saw which has no gaping holes in the thatched roofs, and God knows how far removed Spasskoye still is from the poorest village in the Black Forest!' He went to sleep in his ancestral home overcome by a curious sensation: the very walls seemed to regard him as a stranger! He dared

not leave the house, for the moment he was seen hundreds of starving peasants surrounded him demanding help which he found it difficult to refuse. And yet there was a limit to what he could do. The chief reason for his visit was the sale of some timber, as he wanted to realise some money for his beloved Didie's dowry. He sold it for six thousand roubles, which together with the four thousand he had already put by, made quite a tidy sum. But the terrible contradiction between what he had come for and what was happening before his very eyes made his visit particularly painful. Things were not as bad two years later when he visited Spasskoye again with his English translator, W. R. S. Ralston, though that time, too, something occurred to remind him of the gulf that separated Russia from the rest of Europe. Turgenev had gone to inspect a water-mill on his estate with Ralston and Fet. On their return, he went to his bedroom to wash his hands, leaving the Englishman with Fet in the next room, the door of which was ajar. Ralston asked Fet whether the censorship in Russia was very strict. Fet replied that the censorship existed only in name and that one could publish anything one liked in Russia. After Ralston had gone out, Turgenev came into the room, wiping his hands on a huckaback towel and looking furious. 'I heard what you have just said to Ralston,' he addressed Fet. 'Why did you tell him that? What right have you to tell him that in my house?' It is doubtful whether Ralston was taken in by Fet's patriotic lie, but to Turgenev such a whitewashing of the Russian government was intolerable. 'Except for what Fet said,' he wrote to Polonsky from Spasskoye on 28 June, 'I have come across no infamies here.'

Turgenev entertained Ralston to a village fête. According to Fet, the villagers got out of hand and clamoured for vodka, for which Turgenev kept sending to Mtsensk. During the distribution of ribbons among the peasant women, Turgenev and Ralston were mobbed and had to seek safety on the balcony. But Ralston himself seems to have carried away a most favourable impression of his visit to Turgenev's estate. 'It was a real pleasure', he records, 'to see Turgenev talking to the villagers, the peasants in the neighbourhood and his old servants who came to see their master whom they had known as a child.' Turgenev showed him round his library and was particularly proud to display the works of the

Baden-Baden

Elizabethan playwrights, such as Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and others.

Turgenev's visits to Paris were much more frequent. At the beginning of 1863 he went to three public readings by Charles Dickens which reduced him to a state of speechless rapture. 'Compared with this remarkable genius,' he wrote to Annenkov on 31 January, 'all our famous public readers are transformed into something less than flies. What gaiety, strength, grace, depth! It is quite impossible to describe it.' In February 1865 he was present at the opening of the French Parliament in the Salle des Etats in the Louvre. He was struck by three things: the exclusively military character of the ceremony, the total absence of pretty women, and Louis Napoleon's dull, uninspiring voice which reminded him of the voice of some Swiss professor of botany or numismatics. 'There is nothing more ridiculous', he wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'than men in full dress uniform; the red, yellow and goldbraided berets of the lawyers and judges had such an amusing pseudo-oriental look that one could have died laughing! How many ribbons, stars, helmets, plumes and gold braid! Good Lord, and to think that all that junk produces an effect! Why, it rules the world!'

But his most shattering experience in Paris he had on 19 January 1870, as a 'privileged' spectator at a public execution. He left a detailed description of it in an article published in the July number of the *European Herald*. The execution was of Tropman, who had murdered a whole family in the little village of Pantin. Turgenev accepted Du Camp's invitation to the execution outside the Roquette prison and almost immediately regretted it. But a false feeling of shame prevented him from going back on his word. What, he thought, if they should think that he was afraid? He met Du Camp and a group of eight other people, including the playwright Sardou and the chief of the Sûreté, at eleven o'clock at night near the statue of Prince Eugène. As he approached the prison gates someone in the small crowd that had already collected to watch the execution shouted, 'It's him! It's him!' They had mistaken Turgenev for *Monsieur de Paris*, the Paris executioner, who was as tall and as greyhaired as he. He spent the night in the flat of the governor of the prison, feeling all the time that he had no business to be there and that 'no psychological and philosophic

reasons' justified his being there. At half past one they heard the rattle of wheels and they all rushed out to watch the erection of the guillotine. In the meantime the crowd before the prison gates had grown larger and was being kept back by soldiers—the people shouting, laughing and singing snatches of songs. Back in the governor's flat, they were treated to glasses of wine and spent their time wandering about the rooms like 'lost souls', sitting down, yawning, consulting their watches, and going out into the street to have another look at the guillotine. Turgenev tried to make himself comfortable on a sofa, but he could not sleep. The roar of the crowd grew louder—there were already, Turgenev was told, twenty-five thousand people outside the prison. He went to have a look and was struck by the curious behaviour of a working class lad of about twenty, who stood with downcast eyes, smiling to himself, as though he were thinking of some joke, then threw back his head, opened his mouth wide and uttered a succession of drawn-out screams, after which his head dropped again and his lips distended in the senseless smile. Many people in the crowd were drunk, others tried to sing the Marseillaise, and someone shouted: '*À bas Pierre Bonaparte!*' (Prince Pierre Bonaparte had recently been acquitted of the murder of the French journalist Victor Noir.) That was the only political demonstration that night. As he went back to the prison, Turgenev noticed that 'Monsieur de Paris' and his assistants were busy carrying out a 'rehearsal' of the execution. Instead of watching it, he glanced at the horses which had drawn the van with the dismantled guillotine, and it seemed to him that they were the only innocent creatures among them. Half an hour before the execution (at half past six) he was invited to have a snack but refused. To take food at such a moment seemed revolting to him. As they all trooped to the condemned man's cell, he could not help thinking that they had no right to do what they were doing and that by being present with an air of detached importance at the killing of a fellow man, they were taking part in some horrible comedy. The sight of Tropman, a young man of about twenty, and the whole gruesome ritual of getting him ready for his execution, did nothing to alter his opinion. At the execution itself, Turgenev lagged behind the procession with its priest, journalists and police and prison officials, and stopped at the gates of the prison. When he

Baden-Baden

saw the condemned man strapped to the board by two men who had flung themselves upon him, Turgenev turned away. (Dostoevsky could not forgive Turgenev for turning away at that point: 'A man on this earth' he wrote to Strakhov from Dresden on 23 June, 1870, 'has no right to turn his head away.') Only twenty seconds passed between that moment and the actual execution, but to Turgenev it seemed an eternity. He noticed that at the appearance of Tropman the roar of the crowd was suddenly hushed. He looked up at a sentry who was standing before him—a young, red-cheeked fellow—and he saw a dull look of bewilderment and horror on his face. He had even time to reflect that the soldier might have come from some far away village, from a kindly and peace-loving family, and yet he had to watch such things! At last he heard a soft noise just as if one piece of wood had struck another: that was the noise made by the top part of the yoke with the slit for the guillotine knife as it fell round the murderer's head. Then something suddenly descended with a growl and stopped with an abrupt thud. Just as if an enormous animal had retched—he could think of no other comparison to describe the sound of the chopping off of the head. He felt dizzy. Someone seized his hand and, on looking up, he saw the smiling face of the assistant chief of the Sûreté whom Du Camp had asked to keep an eye on him. 'You look pale,' the police official said. 'Would you like a drink of water?' But Turgenev thanked him and went back to the prison courtyard which seemed to him like a place of refuge from the horrors on the other side of the prison gates.

Listening to the discussions that followed the return of the 'privileged party', Turgenev felt very tired. All of them, he thought, looked worn out. None of them, he observed, showed any sign of having been present at a triumph of justice; they all looked as though they wished to disclaim all responsibility for the legal act of murder. By what right was it all done? he asked himself. How could the death penalty be justified? He saw the impression such a spectacle had made on the people. Could it be really claimed that it had a deterrent effect? He recalled the young workman who had been screaming senselessly and whose face he had watched for a few minutes. Would he, he asked himself, start the day as a man who turned against vice and idleness? And finally, what about

himself? What lesson had he learnt? All he could remember was his feeling of astonishment at the coolness with which the murderer had faced his execution. Was that the impression the lawgivers were anxious to obtain? 'I shall be satisfied and forgive my own misplaced curiosity', Turgenev concluded his article on Tropman's execution, 'if my story supplies a few arguments to those who are fighting for the abolition of capital punishment, or at least for the abolition of public executions.'

During the same period he also visited Heidelberg a few times, mostly to consult heart specialists. It was there he met the group of revolutionary Russian students he satirised in *Smoke*. He spent a winter in Karlsruhe, where Didie was taking lessons in painting, and another in Weimar. Wagner, whose *Tannhäuser* he had joined in booing at its first performance in Paris, had become the most celebrated composer of the day. 'I feel', he wrote to Pauline Viardot on 2 July 1868 from Spasskoye, 'that all this [i.e. Wagner's music] may be very beautiful, but it is different from what I have loved in the past, from what I still love, and I have to make an effort to give up my *Standpunkt* . . . while the *other* art elevates me and sweeps me away like a tidal wave. In this connection the following comparison occurred to me the other day: one can, for example, arouse compassion either by describing or by representing (Laocoon) suffering; either way one can attain the truth. One way is more sensual, but the other sometimes affects you more powerfully. Wagner is one of the founders of the school of groaning and the whole force and penetration of his effects come from that. This comparison, like all other comparisons, is not exact, but it expresses well what I wanted to say.'

In addition to *Smoke*, *Phantoms*, and *The Dog*, Turgenev wrote five other short stories during the Baden-Baden period. Two of them, *The History of Lieutenant Yergunov* and *The Brigadier*, the first one representing one of his less successful attempts at finding some connection between the subconscious and reality and the second based on a letter received by his mother from a retired brigadier (the letter is quoted verbatim in the story), were published in 1868. The third, *The Unhappy Girl*, based on an incident that occurred during his student days in Moscow, was published in 1869. The last two, *A Strange Story*, in which the incident with the

Baden-Baden

'magnetiser' is autobiographical, and *King Lear of the Steppe*, also based on an incident which took place near Spasskoye during his mother's lifetime, were published in 1870. During this period he also wrote his literary reminiscences, his essay *Concerning 'Fathers and Sons'* and a short address on Shakespeare, written in connection with the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth. (It was read in his absence at the Petersburg celebration of the tercentenary on 23 April 1864.)

'Shakespeare', Turgenev wrote in this essay, 'like Nature, is accessible to everybody, and everybody must study him as he studies Nature. Like her, he is simple and complex . . . and full of inner harmony and that steadfast feeling for what is right and that logical inevitability which lies at the foundation of everything living. And therefore let us confine ourselves to quoting the words he applied to perhaps one of the most pure-minded of his characters—to Brutus—

. . . . and the elements,
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, *This was a man!*

Shakespeare did not find a stronger word with which to do honour to defeated virtue, let this word be the highest tribute of our veneration to a triumphant genius.'

A record of Turgenev's life at Baden-Baden would be incomplete without mention of his beloved sport of shooting and his legendary dog Pegasus, to the description of whose virtues he devoted a long essay. However melancholy his mood or great his despair, a day in the country with his dog and shotgun reconciled him to life and to what he began more and more to consider its inevitable shocks.

The Franco-Prussian war put an end to Turgenev's life in Baden-Baden. 'For my part,' he wrote to Borisov from Baden-Baden on 24 August 1870, 'I am glad of the defeat of France, for it has brought about the end of Napoleon's empire, the existence of which was incompatible with the growth of freedom in Europe. . . . But,' he declared in another letter to Polonsky written a month later, 'I do not conceal from myself that not everything will be rosy in the future, and the aggressive greed which has taken possession of Germany does not represent a particularly comforting spectacle.'

Baden-Baden

At night he could hear the bombardment of Strasbourg. 'You can't help giving yourself up to philosophic, historic and social reflections,' he wrote to a correspondent. 'The iron age has not yet passed away—and we are still barbarians! And I daresay we shall remain so till the end of time. . . .' The Viardots fled to England. 'The war', Turgenev wrote to Annenkov on 28 October from Baden-Baden, 'has ruined them and Madame Viardot has to earn money in England, the only country where her merchandise still finds a market.'

At the beginning of November 1870, he followed Pauline Viardot to London.



19. 800

Code 7^e
577^e Pièce

Vieux professeur de l'ingrè et de premier
français dans un collège d'abord, bome,
pédant du talar avec acharnement, ~~la~~ la-
mignon, assez bon au fond, aime à plaisanter
d'une façon pédante. Il est grand, venté, à la
poitrine enfoncée; il est célibataire, aime à
se promener en flânant sur les quais; il est
curieux et bédard. Il ne sort jamais sans sa
cassette et porte de gros gants verts.

The Old Schoolmaster

[An old teacher of French grammar and syntax in a secondary school. Awkward, small-minded, passionately fond of snuff, a bore, but not bad at heart, loves making jokes in a pedantic fashion. Tall, stooping, hollow-chested; a bachelor, fond of loitering on the quays when taking a walk; he is curious and inquisitive. Never leaves the house without his umbrella and always wears large green gloves.]

PART NINE

Bougival

2

Turgenev's pessimism, as he made it plain in *Enough*, arose from his conviction that the human personality—the only thing in the world endowed with the creative spirit—was doomed to perish and could never repeat itself. This belief, indeed, is immanent in all the works he wrote during the Baden-Baden period. The last twelve years he spent in France, on the other hand, are remarkable for his search for a reconciliation between the dreadful necessity of utter dissolution and the undying spiritual values of mankind. As he grew older—and old age came early to him—the feeling of optimism broke through his blackest moods of pessimism. The sight of a sparrow, strutting about perkily and belligerently on a country road while a hawk was ready to pounce on it from the sky, did not fill him with despair, as it would have done before, but made him laugh and shake off his melancholy thoughts. 'I was filled with courage, resolution and a desire for life,' he wrote in one of his *Poems in Prose*. 'Let my hawk hover over me. We'll show 'em yet, damn it!' He wrote this in November 1879, less than three years before his death. But seven years earlier he expressed the same idea in a letter to Gustave Flaubert. 'My dear friend,' he wrote on 26 June 1872, 'old age is a big dark cloud, extending over the future, the present and even over the past, which it makes sad by impairing our memories. We must defend ourselves against this cloud. It seems to me that you are not defending yourself enough.'

Resignation, which he preached in his story *Faust* at the age of thirty-four, he described as 'hideous' in a letter to Flaubert at the

age of fifty-six; and the infirmities of old age, which he told Flaubert a year later were 'the visiting cards Death sends us so that we should not forget it', merely spurred him on to further efforts in his lifelong fight against the injustices of his time. The unresolved conflict between the emotional and intellectual sides of his nature very often led him to give way to despair and made him fix his gaze with morbid intensity upon the door through which man passes into the unknown, convinced though he was that there was nothing beyond it but darkness and emptiness; yet even in his despair there lurked the hope that the human spirit might yet possess unexplored possibilities that would shed a light on this dark void beyond the grave. Besides, fascinating though it was, the mystery of death was not really important. It was again a sparrow—a hen sparrow that threw herself on his dog as he was returning from a shoot in order to save a fledgling that had fallen out of its nest—that gave him the answer to his obsessions with death. 'Love', he wrote in his Poem in Prose *The Sparrow*, 'is stronger than death and the fear of death. Only by it—only by love—does life go on and maintain itself.'

His attitude to religion did not change during the last years of his life. 'From my observations during the past few years,' he wrote to the novelist Pissemsky in 1876, 'I have become convinced that depression, melancholia and hypochondria are nothing but fear of death; it is not surprising that it should grow stronger with every year. There is no radical cure for it, but there are palliatives. If, as you write, religious feelings have become more and more predominant in you, then I can only congratulate you on this invaluable acquisition: it is an infallible remedy, but it is not accessible to everybody.' His own negative attitude towards religion he explained in several of his Poems in Prose, including *The Monk* and *Prayer*, which he wrote in November 1879. In the first he expressed his envy of the monk who found infinite solace in prayer. 'He has achieved the means of destroying himself, of ridding himself of his hateful ego, but,' Turgenev goes on, 'if I do not pray it is not out of vanity. My ego is perhaps more wearisome and more loathsome to me than his is to him. He found a way of forgetting himself, but I too can find it, though perhaps not continuously. He does not lie, but neither do I.' In *Prayer* he points out that man always prays for a miracle. 'Every prayer', he writes, 'comes down to the same thing, namely,

O Lord, make it so that twice two should not be four. Only such a prayer is a real prayer from one being to another. To pray to the World Spirit, to a Higher Being, to the God of Kant or Hegel, to an imageless God, is impossible and unthinkable. But can even a personal, living, imageable God prevent twice two from making four? Every believer must say: He can, and must be convinced of it. But if his reason should revolt against such an absurdity? Then Shakespeare might come to his help: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio . . ." etc. And if anyone should object to that in the name of truth, he can merely repeat the famous question, What is Truth? And therefore,' Turgenev concludes, 'let us drink and be merry and pray.'

Nature remained to him a pitiless and indifferent force to the very end, but to that, too, he found a way of reconciling himself. In *Nature*, the Poem in Prose he wrote in November 1879, he makes Nature say: 'All creatures are my children, and I take care of them in the same way and—destroy them in the same way.' When he stammers out the words Goodness, Reason and Justice, she replies: 'These are man-made words. I know neither good nor evil. Reason is no law for me, and what, pray, is Justice? I gave you life and I shall take it away and give it to others—worms or men, it is all one to me. In the meantime you had better defend yourself and do not interfere with me.' It was the song of the blackbird that reconciled him to Nature's indifference. Its freshness and its strength dispelled his gloomy thoughts of the transience of earthly things. 'The voice of Nature herself', he writes in his Poem in Prose *Blackbird*, 'could be heard in its song, the beautiful and unselfconscious voice which has no beginning and will have no end. . . . There was nothing of itself, nothing personal in it. It was the same blackbird which a thousand years ago welcomed the same sun and will welcome it a thousand years hence when all that remains of me will perhaps whirl round his living, resonant body in invisible specks of dust.' The song of the blackbird, he declares, lifted the heavy load off his heart 'for a moment' and brought a smile to his lips. 'I cried,' Turgenev writes, 'and my dear blackbird carried on with its happy and eternal song! . . . Thank you, little bird, thank you for your free and powerful song which resounded so unexpectedly under my window in that cheerless hour. . . . The rising sun lit up the tears on my flushed face. But I went on smiling . . .'

Bougival

Apart from his works, the most significant sign of his emergence from the mood of spiritual despondency is provided by his renewed interest in women. The most pathetic confession he had ever made to Countess Lambert was that he no longer felt attracted to a pretty face. There could be no stronger evidence than that of his lost zest in life. But between 1872, the year he settled in France, and 1883, the year of his death, he became emotionally involved with two women—Baroness Vrevskaya and the famous actress Maria Savina, both highly intelligent and beautiful women, whose companionship supplied that additional warmth of a personal relationship based on something more than friendship without which life was a bleak desert to him.

There never was any change in his relations to Pauline Viardot and his utter dependence on her, though now and then he certainly wished he could cut the bonds that joined them together. It was no longer a question of physical passion or even of that strange and irresistible fascination her art exerted on him. Nothing could be more revealing than the extract from his diary which he quoted in a letter to Polonsky on 7 April 1877. 'March 17. Midnight. I am sitting at my desk again. Downstairs my poor friend is singing something in her completely cracked voice. . . . and I feel darker than the darkest night. The grave seems to be in a hurry to swallow me up; the day flies past me empty, aimless, colourless. Before you look round it is time to go to bed again. I have neither the will nor the right to live; there is nothing more to do, there is nothing more to expect, there is nothing more even to desire.' He added this rather revealing explanation of how completely Pauline Viardot's fame had disappeared. 'You forget', he wrote, 'that I am fifty-nine and she is fifty-six, and that she is not only unable to sing, but that she, the singer who once created Fides in *The Prophet*, had not even been sent a ticket to the opening of the theatre which you describe so beautifully [in a poem]. And why should they have sent it? For a long time now nothing could be expected from her any more. . . . My dear fellow, we are both just two old crocks'

Turgenev was in one of his despondent moods when he wrote that letter (his last and longest novel, *Virgin Soil*, had been published at the beginning of the year and it had had a very disappointing reception in Russia), but the fact about Pauline Viardot's

Bougival

complete eclipse as an actress and singer could hardly have been stated more clearly. What bound Turgenev to her during the last years of his life was something more powerful than physical passion or the great fascination of her art: it was her indomitable will which had an even stronger influence on him than the equally indomitable will of his mother had ever had. It was a sense of security that he yearned for and that only his mother and Pauline Viardot could give him. This aspect of his dependence on Pauline Viardot appears clearly already in the letter he wrote to her in December 1870 from London (she was giving a concert in the provinces at the time): 'Time passes very slowly,' Turgenev wrote. 'I shall be glad to see you. To the deep and inexhaustible feelings I cherish for you has been added a sort of impossibility of remaining without you. Your absence gives me a sort of physical feeling of fear, just as if I lacked air to breathe. This longing, this secret *unwell*,¹ I cannot shake off or get rid of. When you are with me, I experience a feeling of quiet joy, I feel *at home*² and I want nothing more. Oh, *theuerste Freundin*, I must take care of my precious and beautiful twenty-seven-year-old past. It, too, represents a treasure and inspires me with a feeling of respect. With us, too, the same thing will happen as with Burns's John Anderson, my jo: we shall both totter down the hill together. My dear, dear friend, may the good angels protect you.'

It is doubtful, to say the least, whether the prospect of 'tottering down the hill' together with Turgenev appealed to Pauline Viardot, but there can be no doubt at all that she never told him so. She knew the power she wielded over him, and she exercised it ruthlessly—and that, too, was probably one of the things that bound him so strongly to her.

2

Turgenev stayed in London for seven months. From November 1870 to February 1871 he lived at No. 4, Bentinck Street, Manchester Square, and from April to August 1871 at 16, Beaumont Street, Marylebone. (He spent the whole of the month of March in Russia). According to Henry James, Turgenev passed a 'lugubrious' winter in London. Turgenev told Henry James of his im-

¹ Written in English.

² Written in English.

pressions of that winter when they met in Paris four years later. He mentioned especially 'a visit he had paid to a "bishopress" surrounded by her daughters,' Henry James writes, 'and he gave a description of the cookery at the lodgings he had occupied.' To Flaubert Turgenev wrote from London on 6 May 1871: 'The English have many good qualities, but all of them, even the most intelligent, lead a very hard life. You have to get used to it as to their climate.' He wrote similarly to Fet two months later: 'Life in England is not cheerful, but interesting.'

In London he met George Eliot and was present at many social gatherings in the houses of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Spottiswode and Ford Madox Brown. He also paid a visit to Cambridge in the winter and dined at Trinity. He was present at a Union debate the same evening. The motion, Ralston records, was to the effect that the French communists deserved the sympathy of Englishmen. It had been put up before the downfall of the Commune, but its proposer refused to withdraw it. Turgenev expected to witness a stormy scene and was greatly surprised at the calm with which the students listened to the proposer's arguments and then voted all but unanimously against the motion. 'Now at last I understand', he said to Ralston, 'why you English are not afraid of a revolution.'

At the end of July 1871 Turgenev went to Edinburgh for the Walter Scott centenary celebrations on 9 August. He watched the pageant of Scott's characters and then took part in the banquet of wine, fruit and cakes in the hall of the Corn Exchange. He had prepared a short speech with the aid of an English friend in which he declared that all the best Russian writers had been admirers, and some of them imitators, of Walter Scott, 'the great master of romance'. He was annoyed, though, to see his name misspelt Torqueneff in the report of the banquet which appeared in *The Scotsman* next morning.

He spent the rest of his stay in Scotland grouse-shooting on the moors where he met Robert Browning. 'Mr. Browning', he wrote to Pauline Viardot from Pitlochry on 13 August, 'seemed a dull fellow to me, but then I was so sleepy with fatigue that I could hardly keep on my feet.' He had injured his foot on the first day on the moors and on the second day he was on horseback.

Victorian poetry does not seem to have greatly appealed to him.

Bougival

'English poetry', he wrote to Flaubert in August 1872, 'is not sympathetic, but interesting, and they have one very great lyrical talent—Swinburne.' He repeated the same opinion at greater length to Polonsky two months later. 'The latest English poets,' he wrote, 'all these Rossettis and so on, are mightily exquisite; in Swinburne alone are there flashes of indubitable talent. He imitates Victor Hugo, but possesses a real poetic impulse and passion, while in Hugo all this is invented. Get his *Songs Before Sunrise*. He is sometimes obscure, but I think you will enjoy it all the same.' As for English fiction, Henry James writes: 'The English writer (of our day) of whom I remember to have heard him speak with most admiration was Dickens, of whose faults he was conscious, but whose power of presenting to the eye a vivid, definite figure he rated very high. George Eliot also he greatly admired.'

Turgenev's visit to Russia in 1871 was cut short by one of his cholera scares. 'I feel ridiculous when I remember how frightened I was,' he wrote to Polonsky, 'but should it come again, I'd be running off again with my tail between my legs.' While in Petersburg he had his portrait painted in oils for the first time. He was visited daily by crowds of people. 'It is evident', he wrote to Pauline Viardot, 'that if certain persons think that I am dead and are astonished that I refuse to be buried, others still preserve their old friendship for me, *semper bene!*' He gave a public reading of one of his stories from *The Diary of a Sportsman* and was amazed at the frenzied ovation he received at the end of it. He went to concerts and met Balakirev: '*kein Talent, aber ein Character*' (no talent, but a character) he wrote to Pauline Viardot. He also met Mark Antokolsky, a young sculptor who was to become famous and whose statue of Ivan the Terrible he greatly admired. Antokolsky had to go abroad for reasons of health, and Turgenev wrote an article in a Petersburg daily in which he appealed for contributions to enable the sculptor to make the journey.

There were two reasons for his visit to Russia. First, he was planning to write *Virgin Soil*, his last and longest novel, and he was anxious to study public opinion in his '*cara patria*'. The other reason was much more urgent. His daughter's affairs were in a bad state. Her husband had nearly gone bankrupt soon after their marriage and the Franco-Prussian war had completed his ruin. 'I have

Bougival

received a letter from my daughter', Turgenev wrote to a friend in Moscow, 'which is one cry for help. If she does not raise 40,000 francs soon, she and her husband will be ruined.' He was trying to sell one of his estates to save Paulinette whom he had assured he would never leave in the lurch. He went specially to Moscow to arrange the sale of the estate and while there invested 17,500 roubles in railway stock for Didie's dowry, which he told Pauline Viardot already amounted to 80,000 francs.

In August and November 1871 he went to Baden-Baden to dispose of his house there. 'My Baden-Baden life', he wrote to Fet, 'is a thing of the past. What my future life will be like I do not know nor am I particularly interested.' He was, in fact, entering upon the last period of his life and career as a writer.

3

Turgenev finally installed himself in Paris, a city he never could bring himself to like, in October 1871. For the next three years he occupied two tiny rooms on the top floor of Pauline's Viardot's house at 48, rue de Douai, on the hill of Montparnasse. In the autumn of 1874 the Viardot family together with Turgenev moved to No. 50, rue de Douai, a three-storied house separated from the street by a small wall with railings and a wrought iron gate, with a small courtyard in front and a garden behind. Turgenev now had four rooms including a small sitting-room and next to it a large study with three windows. His study had a large writing desk, an enormous sofa, a few armchairs and pictures of the modern French school on the walls, including a landscape of Theodore Rousseau which he prized highly. Between the windows was a bas-relief of Pauline Viardot in profile and under it a sculpture of her beautiful hand. Of the remaining two rooms, one small one was his library and the other—a larger one—his bedroom. Henry James, who visited Turgenev in 1875, was struck by the almost exaggerated neatness in his personal arrangements, 'a love of order which', he found, 'resulted almost in angularity. In his little green salon,' he goes on, 'nothing was out of place; there was none of the odds and ends of the usual man of letters. . . . Few books were even visible; it was as if everything had been put away. The traces of work had been carefully

Bougival

removed. An air of great comfort, an immeasurable divan, and several valuable pictures—that was the effect of the place.’

Turgenev was a familiar figure at the Salon exhibitions and at the Hôtel Drouot where, he wrote to Polonsky in October 1875, he was known as ‘*le grand Gogo russe*’; Gogo, he explained parenthetically, was the name Parisians gave to a man who was easily cheated. He had been buying pictures before, but not on so large a scale, and not all his purchases were good investments. Most of his pictures were hung in ‘the picture gallery’, a small room with an organ, on the first floor. In the larger adjacent room Pauline Viardot gave her musical parties on Thursdays and her lighter entertainments, including charades, on Sundays. (Henry James records seeing Turgenev taking part ‘with delightful comicality’ in an extempore charade towards the end of 1875). The annual literary and musical matinées Turgenev arranged in aid of the necessitous Russian students in Paris were also held there.

Bougival, near St. Germain, and within easy reach of Paris, became Turgenev’s regular summer resort after 1873. Two years later he and the Viardots bought a country house there. They paid 80,000 francs for it and, considering Pauline Viardot’s reduced circumstances, Turgenev must have contributed most of the money. *Villa des Frênes*, as it was called, was situated on the slope of a wooded hill overlooking the left bank of the Seine. Two paths, with ancient ash-trees and weeping willows on either side, led up the gently sloping hill to the house. There were natural springs in the grounds, and the air was full of the sound of water cascading in little streams over rocks, across lawns, and among clumps of fuchsias and begonias. Turgenev built himself a Swiss chalet within a short distance of the house, ‘very spacious and a little unsunned’, Henry James described it. On the ground floor were his dining room and sitting room. On the first floor was his large study, with bookcases, oil paintings, and furniture covered in dark red morocco. It had a large bow window with a fine view of the Seine valley. Didie’s easel always stood near the window, for Turgenev liked to watch her paint while he was busy at his desk with his correspondence. On the top floor were two more rooms—his bedroom and a guest room. It was in Bougival that he spent most of his time during the last years of his life.

Bougival

Now that he was settled in France, Turgenev no longer kept aloof from the French literary circles, but his attitude to contemporary French literature had not changed. The French writers, he told Saltykov-Shchedrin in November 1875, were following a wrong path. 'Not that they possess no talent,' he wrote, 'but they invent too much. Their literature stinks of literature: that's what's so bad.' Their ignorance of any other literature but their own was proverbial. There is the interesting interchange of letters between Flaubert and Turgenev about Zola's curious notice on a performance of Salvini in *Macbeth*. 'I was bored to tears with *Macbeth*', Zola wrote, 'and I left the theatre without any definite opinion of Salvini. I prefer life to art, I always said so. A masterpiece frozen by the centuries is nothing but a beautiful corpse.' Flaubert drew Turgenev's attention to Zola's article. 'He [Zola] does not think Shakespeare is alive because he is not a contemporary writer!' Flaubert wrote in January 1878. 'I am sorry for him,' Turgenev replied. 'Yes, it is compassion that he arouses in me. And I can well believe that he has never read Shakespeare. It is a sort of deformity of the mind he will never get rid of.'

When Flaubert was in Paris, Turgenev usually saw him every Sunday afternoon, and he also visited him several times at his country house at Croisset. It was at Flaubert's little flat at the top of a house in the Faubourg Saint Honoré that Turgenev met Emile Zola, Alphonse Daudet and later Guy de Maupassant. 'The first time I saw Turgenev', Maupassant writes, 'was at Flaubert's. A door opened and in walked a giant—a giant with a silver head, as one would put it in a fairy-story.' Henry James, whom Turgenev took to see Flaubert at his Paris flat, left a much more detailed description of him. 'He had a frame', he writes, 'which would have made it perfectly lawful, and even becoming, for him to be brutal, but there was not a grain of brutality in his composition. . . . He was exceedingly tall and robust in proportion. His head was one of the finest, and though the line of his features was irregular, there was a great deal of beauty in his face. . . . His expression had a singular sweetness, with a touch of Slav languor, and his eye, the kindest of eyes, was deep and melancholy. His hair, abundantly straight, was as white as silver; and his beard, which he wore trimmed rather short, was of the colour of his hair. In all his tall person,

Bougival

which was very striking wherever he appeared, there was an air of neglected strength, as if it had been a part of his modesty never to remind himself that he was strong. He used sometimes to blush like a boy of sixteen. . . . Friendly, candid, unaffectedly benignant, the impression that he produced was, I think, simply that of goodness . . . and he had not the slightest pretension of not being subject to rectification. I never saw anyone receive it with less irritation. . . .’ Both Maupassant and Henry James were particularly struck by Turgenev’s modesty and unpretentiousness. Maupassant describes him as ‘pushing modesty to the point of humility’, while Henry James thought him so modest and so destitute of personal pretensions ‘that one almost doubted whether he were a man of genius after all’. Turgenev was always the first to arrive at Flaubert’s flat. ‘Taller than Flaubert,’ Maupassant writes, ‘the Russian writer loved the French writer with a rare and profound affection. . . . Turgenev would sink into an armchair and speak slowly, in a soft voice, a little haltingly. Flaubert listened to him religiously, fixing a large blue eye on the big figure of his friend; and he replied in a sonorous voice, which sounded like a clarion call under the moustache of the old Norman warrior. Their talk touched rarely upon the problems of current life and never digressed from literary topics. Turgenev often brought foreign books with him and translated the poems of Goethe, Pushkin and Swinburne.’ According to Henry James, it was at Flaubert’s flat that ‘Turgenev’s beautiful faculty of talk showed itself at its best. He was easy, natural, abundant . . . and everything that he said was touched with the exquisite quality of his imagination. What was discussed in the little smoke-clouded room’, Henry James concludes, ‘was chiefly questions of taste, questions of art and form.’

It was in 1874 that, according to Alphonse Daudet, Flaubert and his friends decided to have regular dinners each month in a private room of some Paris restaurant. These literary dinners, which became known as ‘Flaubert’s dinners’ or ‘the dinners of hissed authors’, were confined to Flaubert, Zola, Edmond de Goncourt, Daudet and Turgenev, each of whom could boast a book that had had a hostile reception. Daudet left a highly coloured description of these *dîners de cinq*: ‘One cannot imagine anything more delightful than these dinners’, he writes, ‘when conversation flowed uncon-

Bougival

strainedly, spiritual powers were stimulated, and the diners threw all restraint to the winds. Being men of experience, we were all good eaters. Needless to say, there were as many different tastes as there were temperaments and as many different dishes as there were provinces. Flaubert ordered Rouen ducks *à l'estoufade*. Goncourt brought refinement and fastidiousness to the point of demanding preserved ginger. I attacked my bouillabaisse and my mussels, and Turgenev treated himself to caviare. We sat down to dinner at seven o'clock and were still at it at two o'clock in the morning. Flaubert and Zola took off their coats; Turgenev stretched himself out on a sofa; we got rid of the waiters, a useless precaution for Flaubert's mighty voice could be heard all over the restaurant, and began discussing literature. Each of us had some book of his own that had just been published, Flaubert his *Tentation de Saint Antoine*, Goncourt his *Fille Elisa*, Zola his *L'Assomoir*, Turgenev his *Living Relics* or *Virgin Soil*, I my *Nabob*. Having done with books and the topics of the day, we came back to those ideas and subjects which were always with us. We discussed love and death, especially death. Everyone expressed his own opinion. Only the Russian on the sofa was silent.

“And what about you, Turgenev?”

“Me? I don't worry about death. No one in Russia worries about the spectre of death; it remains distant, it disappears in the Slav mist.”

Turgenev evidently liked to enjoy a joke at the expense of his French friends; or was he trying to live up to the part of the 'Slav' they assigned to him? Daudet who, next to Goncourt, was the least perceptive of the five, described Flaubert as the 'masculine' and Turgenev as the 'feminine' partner in their unique literary friendship. Actually, it was Turgenev who played the 'masculine' part in it, for it was he who constantly bolstered up the flagging spirits of his friend who complained that since *Salammbô* not a single book of his had been successful and that he had reached 'the state of drought, as the mystics say'. Flaubert was the exact opposite of Turgenev: outwardly strong, he was inwardly very soft and weak. 'An author', Turgenev wrote to him, 'must never be discouraged. He must go on courageously to the end. . . . Keep your head high,' he counselled him, 'so that the floods do not submerge it.' When financial

troubles began to beset Flaubert, it was Turgenev who rallied his friends round him, and when the bankruptcy of his favourite niece's husband forced him to sell his Normandy estate and turned him overnight into a beggar, it was Turgenev who moved heaven and earth to try to obtain for him the job of chief librarian of the Mazarine library. A change of the French Cabinet imperilled Flaubert's chances of getting the post. Turgenev rushed to see Gambetta's secretary and, unable to receive a satisfactory answer from him, went to see Gambetta himself at the salon of Madame Adam. Even he, who had many experiences of scurvy treatment by politicians, did not expect to be so scurvily treated by Gambetta. 'I put on evening dress', Turgenev wrote to Flaubert on 13 February 1879, 'and there I was in her salon which is visited by all the political celebrities and from which France is governed. She received me very amiably and I told her my business. "Gambetta", she said, "is here. He is having a smoke after dinner and we shall find out everything in a moment." Two minutes later she came back and told me that she was awfully sorry but Gambetta already had two candidates for the post. At that moment the dictator himself came in looking extremely affable. I never saw trained dogs dance round their master as the ministers and senators danced round him. Madame Adam took me by the arm and led me to him; but the great man declined the honour of being introduced to me. He said in a loud voice so that I could hear: "I don't want to—I said it was impossible." I made myself scarce and returned home, *sunk*, as they say, into thoughts which I forebear to tell you. That is how much you can depend on fine speeches and promises. . . . Well, old man,' Turgenev concluded, 'you must try to get it out of your head and sit down to do some work again—literary work, the only work that is worthy of a man like you.'

It was Flaubert who was responsible for re-introducing George Sand to Turgenev. 'I should be very pleased indeed', George Sand wrote to Flaubert in April 1869, 'to renew my acquaintance with Turgenev whom I knew a little before I read him,' [George Sand probably met Turgenev at Courtavenel at some date between 1847 and 1850], 'and whom I have since read with great admiration. You seem to be very fond of him: so I too am fond of him and I should like you to bring him to us.' But Turgenev did not visit

George Sand's country house of Nohant till 3 October 1872. He went there with the Viardots, but stayed only one day, as he had not yet recovered from one of his attacks of gout. A week later he wrote to George Sand to tell her how happy he was to have been to see her and how delightful her two grand-daughters were. 'On the way to Nohant,' he wrote, 'I promised myself to tell you what an enormous influence you have had on me as a writer, but I'm afraid I seem to have been rather tongue-tied.' To Polonsky he wrote: 'About George Sand I can only tell you that she is a very kind, a very simple and a very intelligent old lady.' After George Sand's death in the summer of 1876, he wrote to Alexey Suvorin: 'When I first got to know George Sand closely, the rapturous surprise which she had once aroused in me had long disappeared—I no longer idolised her; but it was impossible to enter into her family circle without becoming her admirer in a different, perhaps in a better, sense. Everyone felt at once that he was in the presence of an infinitely generous and benevolent nature in which all egoistic feelings had long been reduced to ashes by the unquenchable flame of poetic enthusiasm and faith in an ideal; a nature which was accessible to everything human and which overflowed with sympathy and help. And, above all this, there was a kind of unselfconscious aura about her, something exalted, free, heroic. . . . Believe me, George Sand is one of our saints; you will of course understand what I want to say by that word.'

Turgenev visited Nohant four times between 1873 and 1875, once together with Flaubert. After his first visit George Sand sent him a present of gold cuff-links; he sent her barrels of oysters.

If Turgenev had acted as comforter, literary adviser and translator to Flaubert (he translated three of Flaubert's stories), he took an even more active part in furthering the literary career of Zola. At a time when Zola could not place a single article in the French press, Turgenev came to his rescue and found a market for him in Russia. 'I was starving,' Zola writes, 'I was being bespattered with mud on all sides, and it was just then that Turgenev introduced me to Russia where I became so popular.' Turgenev did more: he conducted negotiations on Zola's behalf with Russian editors and publishers, placed his novels in Russian periodicals, and suggested subjects for articles he should write for the Russian

Bougival

press. He did the same for Maupassant, getting Russian translators for him and going over their translations himself, and on one occasion paying Maupassant out of his own pocket the difference between what the Russian publisher of *Une Vie* was ready to pay and what he should have paid.

4

Virgin Soil was published in 1877 in the January and February issues of the *European Herald*. Turgenev spent about six years in planning and writing the novel which he intended to be his last one and into which, he told the editor of the *European Herald*, the liberal historian Mikhail Stassyulevich, he wanted to put everything he thought and felt about the situation in Russia. It was to be his final challenge to both the reactionary and revolutionary forces in the country. The great scope of the novel and its high purpose made him reluctant to hurry with his work, particularly as his life abroad made it difficult for him to study his characters on the spot. In the meantime he wrote his short novel *Spring Waters* and five stories: *Knock-Knock*, *The End of Cherptokhanov*, *Living Relics*, *Punin and Baburin*, and *The Watch*. Contrary to his expectations, *Spring Waters* was a great success in spite of the fact that it had no political or social interest. The issue of the *European Herald* in which it was published in January 1871 had to be reprinted, an unprecedented event in the history of Russian periodicals. It had an unexpected sequel, the satirical description of the German officers and the Wiesbaden theatre having aroused the anger of Germans both in Russia and in Germany. Pietsch wrote an indignant letter to Turgenev about it. 'Good Lord,' Turgenev wrote in reply, 'how touchy the Germans have become after their recent victories! What fastidious old maids! You can't bear the fact that in my last long short story I scratched you a little. The critic in the Petersburg German daily . . . calls upon the German officers to wipe off the face of the earth the libellous and arrogant liar (that is, me!) My last story may not be particularly good, but those few pin-pricks are the best and the most truthful things in it.' It was Flaubert who, as usual, found the right words in which to express his admiration for one of Turgenev's masterpieces. 'Ah,' he wrote on 2 August 1873,

Bougival

‘that is a love story if ever there was one! You know everything there is to know about life and you know how to put it into words, which is an even rarer accomplishment. *Quel homme que mon ami Tourguéneff! Quel homme!*’

Knock-Knock, also published in 1871, was described as ‘an absurdity’ and ‘an unimportant trifle’ by two of Turgenev’s highbrow women correspondents. Turgenev replied that it was one of the most serious things he had ever written. ‘It is a study of suicide,’ he wrote, ‘a vain, stupid, superstitious, absurd suicide, which is as interesting and as important a subject as any other grave and important social problem . . . for it adds a document to the analysis of man’s personality and, in effect, all poetry, beginning with an epic and ending with a farce, has no other object than that.’

The next two stories were additions to *The Diary of a Sportsman*. Annenkov protested against the resumption of his first series of stories and, particularly, against writing a continuation of one of them (*Cherptokhanov and Nedopyuskin*), for it seemed to him that Turgenev was going back to a mode of artistic expression on which he could not possibly improve. Turgenev agreed and in reply to the request for a story from the editor of a Russian weekly, promised to send a few poems by Walt Whitman—‘the wonderful American poet’—which he intended to translate but never did. Later Polonsky asked him to contribute a story to a symposium in aid of the famine-stricken peasants of the province of Samara, and he sent him *Living Relics*, a story he had begun at the time when he was writing *The Diary of a Sportsman*, and which he finished in January 1874. The story, to his surprise, brought him a warm tribute from George Sand. ‘*Maître!*’ she wrote. ‘*Nous devons aller tous à votre école!*’ He was so overwhelmed by this tribute, Turgenev wrote to George Sand on 15 April 1874, that he hardly dared to thank her. He had intended to dedicate the story to her, he went on, and he was sorry he had listened to Pauline Viardot’s advice to wait until he had written something more important and worthy of her.

Punin and Baburin, published in 1874, and *The Watch*, published in 1876, provide, as it were, an historical perspective for the revolutionary leaders of his last novel.

To obtain the material for his novel he went to Russia in the summer of 1872, but only stayed a very short time there. The

Bougival

weather was particularly fine and for three whole days he lived in his Spasskoye park. 'I don't know anything more delightful than our old parks,' he wrote to Annenkov in June. 'Nowhere in the world do you get such fragrance and such greenish-golden *greyness* under the faintly rustling lime-trees, in those long and narrow avenues overgrown with silken grass and wild strawberries.' It was the wild strawberries that sent him scurrying out of Russia. He had paid a visit to Shchepkin's country house and had had some wild strawberries with cream there. When he returned to Spasskoye he felt ill. There was an outbreak of cholera in the Oryol province at the time and he got so scared that he rushed off to Moscow the next day. There he got one of his violent attacks of gout, but even that did not stop him. A few days later he was back in France, where he stayed with the Viardot family at Sainte-Valerie-sur-Somme. Paulinette had at last presented him with a grand-daughter (she had had three miscarriages before that) named Jeanne in his honour. He had to go to Rougemont for the christening, but was again delayed by gout. In January 1873 he wrote to a correspondent from Paris that the plan of his novel was complete in every detail, but that out of its twelve characters two had not been sufficiently studied in their proper environment. Until that was done he could not start writing his novel, for he did not want 'to invent' them. To the question why in that case he did not live in Russia, he could only reply that that was 'the fatal thing (in the sense of *fatum* and not of fatality)' which he was as little capable of changing as he was of changing the shape of his nose. At the beginning of July he went to Carlsbad. In Vienna he had a bad fall and injured his leg and had to stay at an expensive hotel for a week. All this made it impossible for him to visit Russia that year and, greatly improved in health by his cure, he returned via Baden-Baden to France.

It was at the end of that year that he met Baroness Julia Vrevskaya, a goodlooking woman of thirty-two, with whom he conducted a curiously indeterminate love affair for the next four years. At the beginning of 1874 his beloved Didie got married, and he spent a few hectic weeks making all the necessary arrangements for her wedding. By the middle of May he was back in Russia where, he wrote to Flaubert, he found the material he was looking for. He also met the baroness who spent five days at Spasskoye. Turgenev

Bougival

read poetry to her, kissed her hand, and indulged in a bout of mild philandering. 'I can't help feeling', he wrote to her later, 'that if we had met when we were young and inexperienced and, above all, free—you can finish the sentence for yourself.' (It is an interesting fact that none of the letters Turgenev wrote to Pauline Viardot after 1871 has been preserved, possibly because Pauline Viardot did not consider them sufficiently ardent.) He met the baroness again in Carlsbad next year, where she too was taking the waters. Two years later he wrote to her: 'Since I met you I have grown fond of you as a friend, but at the same time I had a persistent desire to possess you; it was not, however, so uncontrollable as to make me ask your hand in marriage; on the other hand, I knew very well that you would never consent to what the French call "*une passade*".' Her reply contained a sentence that puzzled him; on 8 February he wrote to her: 'There is no doubt that some time ago if only you had wanted—'. They met for the last time in Russia shortly before her departure for the front as a nurse at the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war in 1877. At the front she contracted typhus and died in a military hospital in Bulgaria in 1878. Turgenev dedicated one of his Poems in Prose to her. 'She was young and beautiful,' he wrote. 'Women envied her . . . two or three men loved her secretly and deeply. Life smiled on her, but there are smiles which are worse than tears. A tender and gentle heart—and such strength, such a longing for sacrifice! To help those who are in need of help—she knew no other happiness—nor did she taste any. Every other happiness had passed her by. But she had long reconciled herself to it—and all ablaze with the fire of unquenchable faith, she dedicated herself to the service of her fellow men. . . .'

There can be little doubt that his friendship with Baroness Vrevskaya gave Turgenev a new interest in life and the necessary strength and impetus to sit down and write his longest novel. None of his other works, he told Polonsky, had been written so quickly and easily and with the fewest number of corrections. On 26 March 1876, he wrote to the Baroness from Paris that he had at last begun his work on the novel, and on 27 July he wrote to Stassyulevich from Spasskoye that he had at last finished it. 'It's title,' he added, 'will be *Virgin Soil* with the epigraph: "Virgin soil has to be turned up not with a wooden ploughshare which only scratches the surface

Bougival

but with an iron one which digs deep into it. (From the diary of an agronomist).” ’ He left Russia for France a few days later and spent another three months on the revision of the novel. ‘The *ploughshare* in my epigraph’, he wrote to Stassyulevich from Bougival on 7 August, ‘does not stand for revolution but for enlightenment.’ He did not deceive himself about the success of the novel. ‘There can be no doubt,’ he wrote to Polonsky from Paris on 23 November, ‘that if I was beaten with sticks for *Fathers and Sons*, I will be belaboured with logs for *Virgin Soil*—and from both sides as before.’ He was right about the storm of vituperation his novel would raise in Russia both from the reactionaries and the revolutionaries; but he was wrong in thinking that those attacks would leave him cold.

What was the main idea of *Virgin Soil* as Turgenev conceived it? He explained it in a letter to Stassyulevich on 3 January 1877, shortly before the publication of the first part of the novel in the *European Herald*. ‘The younger generation’, he wrote, ‘has hitherto been presented in our literature either as a gang of swindlers and rogues, which is unjust and could only insult the young reader, who would regard it as a lie and a libel; or it was idealised, which again is unjust and, besides, harmful. I decided to choose the middle way and so get nearer to the truth; to take young people, most of them good and honest, and show that notwithstanding their honesty the business on which they were engaged was so false and untrue to life that it could only end in a complete fiasco. . . . In any case, the young people cannot possibly claim that it is an enemy who has depicted them; on the contrary, they must, I think, feel the sympathy I have if not for their aims then at least for their personalities. It is in this way that a novel written for them and about them can be of use to them. I can foresee’, he concluded, ‘that I shall be overwhelmed with reproaches from both camps; but after all the same thing happened to me with *Fathers and Sons* and yet of all my literary past I have good reason to be satisfied only with that novel. In fact, I’d sooner agree to destroy *The Diary of a Sportsman* than *Fathers and Sons*.’

Turgenev was wrong in thinking that he could stop a political movement by showing those who believed in it passionately what they and their ideas were really like as seen through the eye of the

dispassionate artist. The inevitable result of such an experiment is always to invite from the people so depicted a violent protest against what they regard as a deliberate distortion of their aims and a libellous caricature of themselves. The more truthfully and convincingly the artist presents his case against them, the more strongly will their resentment against him grow. In the spring of 1874 great numbers of young people, as Turgenev described in *Virgin Soil*, began leaving their comfortable homes and going among the peasants, 'going into the people', as they called it, with the aim of rousing it against the government. Turgenev had studied these young revolutionaries closely both in Russia and abroad. He was a friend of many Russian revolutionaries in France, including Peter Lavrov, the leader of the 'populist' movement, who was a member of the First International and the editor of the revolutionary journal *Forward*. Turgenev supported *Forward* financially not because he shared Lavrov's views but because he thought that his journal might exert pressure on the Russian government in the same way as Herzen's *The Bell* had done. In *Virgin Soil* Turgenev presents a whole gallery of different types of Russian revolutionaries. More striking still are their opponents, the 'liberal-bureaucrat' Sipyagin and the conservative Kolomeytsev. The war Turgenev had declared on the Russian aristocracy in *Fathers and Sons* assumed a more uncompromising and more ruthless form in *Virgin Soil*. He foresaw its approaching downfall clearly and he was only ten years out in forecasting it: he made one of his characters declare that the revolution would not come for another thirty years—it came exactly forty years after the publication of *Virgin Soil*. The authorities were too late in realising the 'inflammatory' nature, as the censor put it, of the novel. The Minister of the Interior, according to Turgenev, declared that if he had read the whole of it earlier, he would most certainly have prohibited it. 'My last book', Turgenev wrote to a friend on 3 August 1877, 'gave me a great deal of trouble and little joy. The thing that annoyed me most was that I had to suppress so many things and pass over in silence so many more; and even then *Virgin Soil* in its present form nearly perished in the fire of the Censorship Committee and was only saved by one vote.' (There were ten members of the Censorship Committee, five of whom voted for the suppression of the second part of the novel and five,

Bougival

including the chairman, against: the novel was therefore saved only by the chairman's casting vote.)

In spite of the unanimous condemnation of the novel in the Russian press, the political events in the country soon proved that Turgenev was right and his detractors wrong. Hardly a month after the publication of *Virgin Soil* the authorities arrested a group of fifty-two revolutionaries, including eighteen young women. 'This is really funny,' Turgenev wrote to Stassyulevich from Paris on 11 March. 'One of my critics, for instance, assured his readers that there were no Mariannas to be found in Russia and that I had invented them, and then suddenly there is this trial in which out of fifty-two accused eighteen are women—an unheard of thing in Europe at any time!' Two days later he wrote to Baroness Vrevskaya: 'The fact that out of the fifty-two accused (revolutionaries) eighteen are women is so astonishing that the French, for instance, are simply stumped by it. And the critics reproached me for having invented Marianna!'

The trial of the fifty-two created such a sensation in Europe and America that *Virgin Soil* suddenly became a best-seller in France, England and the United States. 'If the novel had not been written and published before the political trial which is at present taking place in Petersburg', a French critic wrote, 'one might have thought that Turgenev was just a copyist; but in fact he has shown himself to be a prophet. . . . *Virgin Soil* has suddenly become history.' Its success abroad, however, meant little to Turgenev. Its failure in Russia was what mattered to him. Once more, as after the failure of *Fathers and Sons*, he vowed never to write anything again, and he threatened once more to devote himself entirely to a translation of *Don Quixote*, though this time he also threw in Montaigne for good measure. This mood did not last and two years later he wrote in the introduction to the 1880 edition of his collected works: 'As for *Virgin Soil*, I think it is unnecessary for me to say with what unanimous condemnation this last work of mine met. With the exception of two or three opinions—written, not printed—no one had a good word to say for it. At first I was assured that I had invented it all; that, living almost continuously abroad, I was entirely out of touch with Russian life and the Russian people; that my only motive in writing it was petty vanity and a desire for popularity; one jour-

nalist hastened to declare that every decent man ought to spit on my book and then trample it underfoot. Another reviewer went even further. Commenting on some articles which had been published abroad about *Virgin Soil*, he delivered himself of the following dictum: "Let the foreigners write articles about him, we don't want even to spit on him!" Then after the famous trial, which proved that the greater part of what had been called my inventions was true, my judges began to accuse me of having taken part in those revolutionary plots myself or at least of having known about them beforehand, for how else could I have foreseen and foretold them, etc. etc. All this gradually adjusted itself, and during my last visit to Russia I could convince myself that . . . the majority of my fellow-countrymen do not consider my novel useless or harmful or worthy of contempt.'

Turgenev, like many another writer, made the mistake of taking his reviewers too seriously. Living abroad, that was perhaps natural. His visit to Russia in 1879, however, showed him how little need there was for him to worry about the affection and admiration he inspired in his own people and, particularly, in the younger generation.

5

The 'reconciliation' with his public in Russia in 1879 was preceded two years earlier by his reconciliation with Nekrasov and Tolstoy. He went to see Nekrasov, who was dying, during his visit to Russia in June 1877. Five months previously Baroness Vrevskaya had urged him to write to Nekrasov. 'I'd gladly write to him myself,' he replied, 'for before death everything is smoothed out, and, anyway, who of us is right or—wrong? There are no guilty, says Lear, and there are no innocents. But I am afraid that my letter might appear like a death warrant to him. I know that if I had been in Nekrasov's place, I should have regarded the receipt of such a letter in *such* a situation as the equivalent of *Lascia ogni speranza* or *Frère, il faut mourir*. It seems to me that I have no right to take a risk like that.' But next June there was no longer any danger of such a risk: Nekrasov was beyond human help. Their meeting lasted only a moment. Turgenev, tall and dignified, top hat in hand,

Bougival

appeared at the door of Nekrasov's room, glanced at him sitting inert and motionless in a chair, and was shocked by the terrible change in his appearance. Nekrasov raised his thin and emaciated hand in a farewell gesture to Turgenev, as though wishing to indicate that he was too weak to talk to him. Turgenev, who seemed about to burst into tears, returned Nekrasov's greeting and left without uttering a word.

Nekrasov died on 8 January 1878, and in April Turgenev wrote his Poem in Prose, *The Last Meeting*, in memory of the man who had been one of his most intimate friends and from whom he had parted 'like an enemy'. It was death, he wrote, that had reconciled them. Turgenev never concealed his dislike for Nekrasov's poetry, and in reply to a Russian critic's assertion that it was greater than the poetry of Pushkin or Lermontov, he could only quote (in a letter to Polonsky) Schiller's lines:

*Ich sah des Ruhmes schoenste Kraenze
Auf der gemeinen Stirn entweiht . . .¹*

In May 1878 Turgenev received a letter from Tolstoy which put an end to their quarrel too. 'To my own surprise and joy,' Tolstoy wrote, 'I have recently become aware that I no longer harbour any ill feeling towards you. I hope that you feel the same. To tell the truth, knowing how kind you are, I am almost convinced that your hostile feelings towards me disappeared even before mine. If that is so, then please, let us hold out our hands to each other and, please, forgive me for any wrong I have done you.' Tolstoy went on to express his thanks to Turgenev for having made his name known in Europe and repeated his wish to be friends with him again. 'At our time of life,' he wrote, 'there is only one good—loving relations with people, and I should be very happy if such relations could exist between us.'

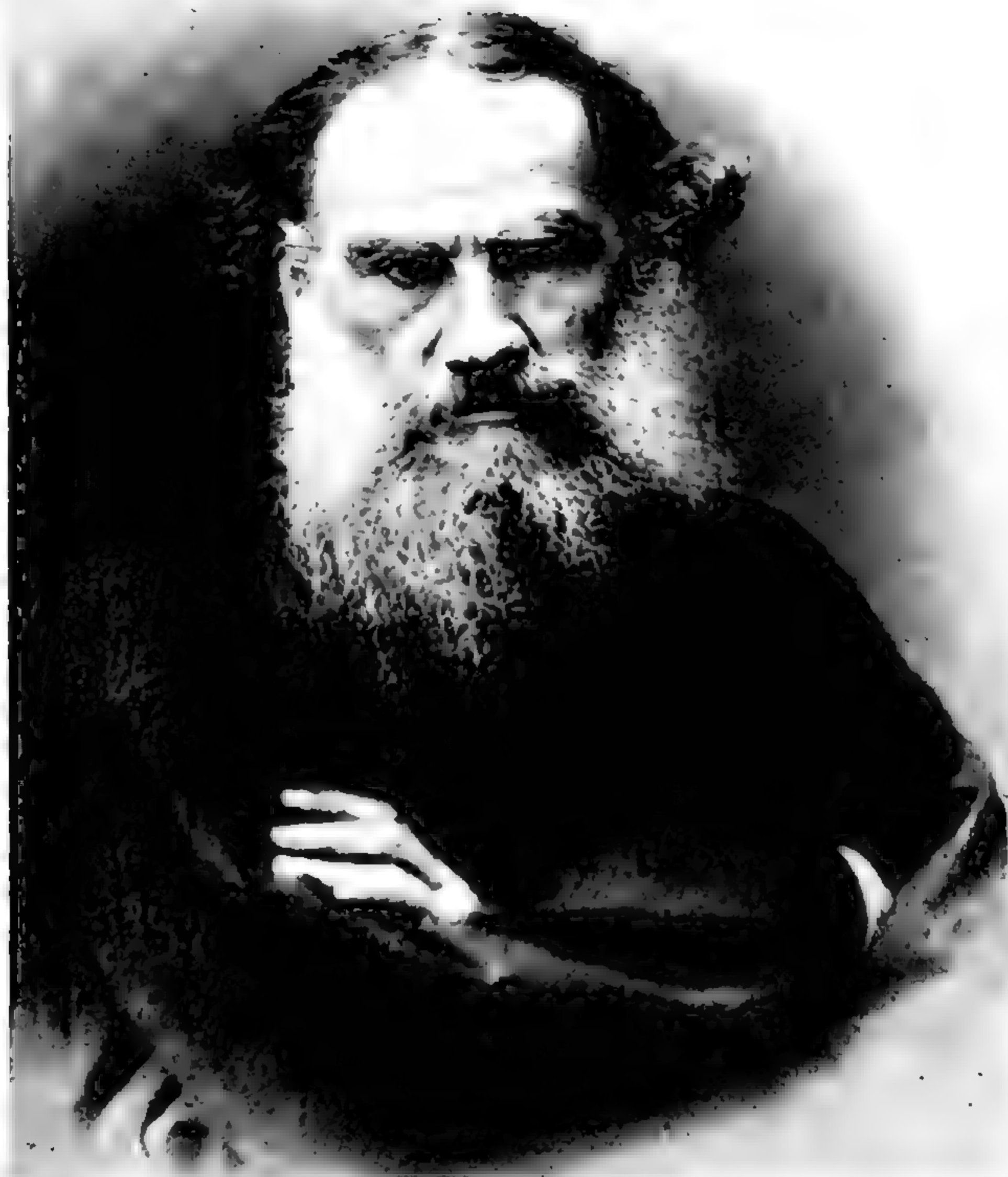
Turgenev was of course only too glad to grasp Tolstoy's outstretched hand. 'You are quite right in believing', he wrote to Tolstoy on 20 May from Paris, 'that I harbour no ill feeling towards you; even if I ever did, they disappeared long ago and all that remains is the memory of you as a man to whom I was sincerely devoted and of a writer whose first steps I welcomed before anyone

¹ I saw fame's most beautiful wreaths desecrated on a mean brow.

else and whose every new work always aroused in me the most lively interest. I am sincerely glad of the termination of the misunderstandings between us. I hope to get to the Oryol province this summer and then of course we shall meet.'

A month before, Turgenev had had to sell his collection of pictures, including his Teniers, but not his Rousseau, at a loss of 12,000 francs in order to repay a debt he owed to his brother. Tolstoy's letter must have arrived just in time to soften that blow. He met Tolstoy during his visit to Russia in August. Before that he took part as vice-chairman in the International Literary Congress, which opened in Paris on 16 June under the chairmanship of Victor Hugo. 'A hundred years ago,' Turgenev declared in his opening address to the Congress, 'we were your pupils; today you accept us as your colleagues.' He was not a great success in the chair: he would call on a speaker to speak out of turn, or he would get up as though wishing to make some statement and then sit down without having uttered a word, or he would ring his bell to restore order in such a half-hearted way that no one took any notice, and on one occasion he dropped it on the floor. He looked very imposing, though, with his tall figure, white hair, immaculate evening dress, pince-nez, and complete absence of affectation. He himself was not very impressed by the congress. 'My friend,' he wrote to Flaubert on Sunday, 25 June, 'what an absurd thing a deliberative assembly is! Take Hugo, for instance. He prepared a superb speech yesterday, a speech that was acclaimed, and his proposals were unanimously accepted and embodied into the constitution—yet five minutes later another resolution was passed which was diametrically opposed to his proposals. And he voted for it *himself*! ! ! We rush about all over the place like imbeciles. . . . I have had quite enough of it and I am leaving for Carlsbad on Wednesday. The waters I shall be taking there may be a delusion, too, but at least it is not so obvious.'

Turgenev arrived in Moscow from Carlsbad on 15 August and at once wrote to Tolstoy suggesting that they should meet in Tula and from there go to Yasnaya Polyana. This they did, and Turgenev spent three very pleasant days at Tolstoy's country house. Tolstoy took him for a walk round his estate. At dinner Turgenev noticed that they were thirteen at table and, unable to suppress his superstitious fears, raised his hand and said: '*Qui craint la mort lève la*



Leo Tolstoy, aged 57



Maria Savina

Bougival

main.' No one raised his hand except Tolstoy, who was also obsessed by the fear of death. '*Moi aussi,*' he said, '*je ne veux pas mourir.*' Both were aristocrats and both lapsed naturally into French when expressing some deep-seated emotional feeling. In the evening they played chess, Tolstoy finding it a little hard to exercise his newly acquired Christian humility whenever Turgenev won a game, and in the daytime they retired to Tolstoy's study for a long talk, it being now Turgenev's turn to exercise his un-Christian humility in not hurting Tolstoy's feelings by saying anything rash and provocative. 'I cannot help telling you again', Turgenev wrote to Tolstoy on his return to Spasskoye, 'what a good and pleasant impression my visit to Yasnaya Polyana made on me and how glad I am that the misunderstandings that had arisen between us have vanished without a trace. I felt very clearly that . . . you and I have become better than we were sixteen years ago, and I was glad to have felt that.'

A sequel to his reconciliation with Tolstoy was that he made up his quarrel with Fet with whom he had stopped corresponding in 1874. 'There cannot be anything in common', he had written to Fet at the time, 'between me and a magistrate who seriously reproaches peasants for not having broken the head of a thief they had caught with the end of a shaft-bow.' In the same letter to Tolstoy he wrote that Fet had sent him a very charming though rather obscure letter full of quotations from Kant, and that he had at once replied to him. 'So that,' he concluded, 'I did not come to Russia for nothing this time.'

He did not, indeed. He even made his peace with his eighty-three year old uncle Nicholas, who had gone blind in the meantime. Six years earlier he wrote to his brother: 'The news of Nicholas Turgenev—blind and in hospital, has aroused my pity. I loved him dearly after all and I can't help esteeming our past. I shall certainly visit him, and you too, brother, ought to do the same, remembering that we are all men—feeble, weak creatures doomed to die. Here but for the grace of God go I—how can we help pitying our fellow-men? And who of us is without sin? Who has the right to condemn another? I do not doubt that your visit will please him in his present plight.' Turgenev's visit certainly pleased the old reprobate, who, Fet records, got drunk on champagne and gave vent to 'expressions of the most unrestrained cynicism'.

Bougival

Turgenev wrote to Tolstoy again from Bougival on 13 October to tell him of the arrangements he had made for the translation of *The Cossacks* into French and English. Then he left for England 'to shoot pheasants, partridges, etc.,' on the Cambridgeshire estate of an English friend, and later paid a visit to Oxford and Cambridge. 'Wonderful, odd, majestic, stupid—all at once, and above all totally foreign to us', was how he described his impressions of the two ancient seats of learning to Fet in a letter from Paris on 12 November. 'They hate us terribly there,' he added, 'and they don't conceal it, either, which is just as well.'¹

On his return to Paris he received a letter from Tolstoy complaining about his 'intellectual sickness', which seems to have awakened his old misgivings about Turgenev's 'sincerity', and his odd fears that Turgenev was 'laughing' at him. That certainly appears to have been an obsession with him. 'I am glad', Turgenev wrote in reply, 'that you are physically well and I hope that your "intellectual sickness", about which you write, has passed away. I too was familiar with it: sometimes it would appear in the form of an inner discontent before the beginning of some work; I expect that you suffered from the same kind of discontent. Though', he went on, 'you ask me not to talk about your writings, I cannot help observing that it never occurred to me to laugh at you "even a little"; some, *The Cossacks*, for instance, gave me great pleasure and aroused my admiration. But why on earth should I laugh? I thought that you had long ago rid yourself of such "recurring" sensations. Why are they only known to authors and not to painters, musicians and other artists? I suppose it is because in a literary work one cannot help putting a little more of that part of oneself that it is not quite convenient to show. Yes; but in our far from young writing days it is time we got used to it.'

Turgenev's frank and rational letter infuriated Tolstoy. 'Yesterday', he wrote to Fet, 'I received a letter from Turgenev; and, you

¹ This wave of Russophobia was the result of friction between England and Russia after the Treaty of Berlin. The Bulgarian massacres produced the only jingoist 'poem' Turgenev ever wrote—his *Croquet at Windsor*. He composed it while travelling in a train at night. It was banned by the censorship, which, however, did not prevent it, he told his brother in December 1876, 'from being distributed all over Russia, being read at the Crown Prince's, and translated into German, French and English.'

Bougival

know, I decided to keep as far away from him and from sin as possible. He is such an unpleasant, cantankerous person.' Tolstoy was certainly still far from achieving the state of true humility which, as Maupassant and Henry James realised, was so natural to Turgenev.

6

The year 1879—the *annus mirabilis* of Turgenev's fame—began rather ominously. His brother Nicholas died in January and though, as he told Flaubert, there was nothing in common between them and they had seen each other rarely, he was very upset. For after all it was his brother, 'something less than a friend, it is true, but also something much more intimate'. Nicholas had died a multi-millionaire, but he left Turgenev only 250,000 francs in his will. Turgenev, who was always in need of money—the Viardot ménage and the upkeep of his daughter were a terrible drain on his resources—felt that if he did not go to Russia at once, his brother's relations by marriage might cheat him of his inheritance. His departure for Russia however, was delayed by another of his violent attacks of gout, aggravated this time by 'a fantastic cold', which, he wrote to Zola, kept him awake at night and made him think that he was going to suffocate. He had to miss the first night of *L'Assommoir* which Zola had adapted for the stage.

It was while Zola's much discussed novel was appearing in *La République des Lettres* that the only meeting between Turgenev and George Moore took place. George Moore met him at a students' dance at the Elysées Montmartre. 'I turned and saw one immense man walking as though through a crowd of pigmies,' George Moore described his first glimpse of Turgenev ten years later in the *Fortnightly Review*. They sat down at one of the beer tables and, as George Moore had been introduced to him as an English poet, Turgenev spoke to him of Rossetti and Swinburne. In Rossetti, he said, he noted the first signs of decadence in the English language. Swinburne, on the other hand, he thought was a genius in spite of some imitations of Victor Hugo. . . . At that point he was interrupted, for George Moore had noticed a girl he wanted to dance with and rushed away with a curt apology. Turgenev had by that time become inured to such treatment by young men, and when

Bougival

George Moore returned, he greeted him with his usual affability. 'Eh bien', he said, '*vous vous êtes bien amusé?*' But he did not resume his analysis of Swinburne's poetry; instead he talked of *L'Assommoir*. 'For the first time', George Moore records Turgenev as saying, 'Zola has created a human being; Gervaise is a woman; I feel her, I know her, she is true. Still the same vicious method pervades the book—the desire to tell us what she felt rather than what she thought. *Je me demande qu'est-ce que cela peut me faire si elle sue au milieu du dos ou sous les bras* (I ask myself what is it to me whether she sweats between her shoulderblades or under her arms).'

Turgenev arrived in Moscow at the end of February to settle the matter of his inheritance. He had left France depressed by his failure to obtain a job for Flaubert and by the appalling winter he had lived through. 'What a sad winter!' he wrote to Flaubert. 'There is not a mole which leads a more retiring life than I. To be alone, all alone, and to do nothing, that gives you the taste and the foretaste of your uselessness. In a word, patience!'

In Moscow he sensed a curious change in the atmosphere. Maxim Kovalevsky, a well known lawyer, historian and sociologist, who was to become a close friend of Chekhov, invited him to dinner. There were twenty other writers and journalists present. At the end of the dinner Kovalevsky rose heavily from his chair and proposed a toast to 'the loving and forbearing instructor of our youth'. Turgenev was so touched by that unexpected tribute that he burst out sobbing. Next day he wrote: 'Last night's dinner will long remain in my memory as something that has never happened in my whole life.' Pissemsky invited him to a public reading of one of his novels at the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature. At first he excused himself as he was not feeling well. But in the end he decided to go. He came late and as he went through the main entrance to the lecture room he brushed against the magic lantern screen. He bent down to put it straight and for a moment his head was clearly outlined against the white screen. To his utter surprise he was greeted by a storm of applause. Pissemsky's reading was interrupted. An excited student jumped up on his seat and made an impromptu speech in which he hailed Turgenev in the name of Russian students 'as the author of *The Diary of a Sportsman*, which is indissolubly connected with the history of the emancipation of the peasants.'

Bougival

This speech was followed by another ovation. As Turgenev reached the front door after the reading, students raced after him and nearly lifted him on their shoulders. He had to be rescued by the police from being mobbed in the street. At a public dinner given in his honour by the professors of Moscow University, the rector made a speech in which he stressed the indebtedness of the younger generation to the ideals of such men as Granovsky, Belinsky and Turgenev. In his reply, Turgenev gave this definition of his creed as a liberal: 'It is', he said, 'a protest against all the dark forces of oppression, a respect for learning and education, a love of art and poetry, and, finally and above all, a love of the common people.' He followed it up by a toast to 'the flourishing of Moscow university and the manifold and vigorous development of the youth of our country—our hope and our future.' From morning till night his place was crowded with people—students, actors, writers, artists who wanted to paint his portrait, and autograph hunters. One morning his rooms were invaded by crowds of girls and he spent the whole day signing autographs. By the time they left in the evening he was utterly exhausted. Later he described his visit in Moscow as 'the best reward an author can get before the end of his career.'

In Petersburg, where Turgenev arrived towards the end of March, an even more enthusiastic reception awaited him. His hotel was crowded with excited autograph-hunters, mostly girls, who pilfered his books, clamoured for autographs and fought each other for the possession of some souvenir. Shortly after his arrival a group of Petersburg's writers gave a dinner in his honour. It was at this dinner that he was involved in an unpleasant scene with Dostoevsky. He had prepared a brief speech which he read from a piece of paper. In it he expressed the view that the cleavage between the older and the younger generations, which he had described sixteen years earlier in *Fathers and Sons*, no longer existed. There was already, he claimed, some common ground on which the two could meet, for both could work together 'to crown the edifice', a euphemistic expression which everybody understood. What Turgenev meant was that they should all work together for the introduction of a constitutional monarchy. This angered Dostoevsky, who by that time had become a pillar of Czarist autocracy, and after the

applause had died down, he jumped up excitedly from his seat and, rushing up to Turgenev, shouted: 'Repeat, repeat what you've just said! Tell us frankly what you are driving at? What is it you want to foist on Russia?'

'I said what I wanted to say,' Turgenev replied, rising to his full height and spreading out his hands in a gesture of bewilderment. 'I hope everybody understood me. And as for your *interrogation*, I am not bound to answer, however passionately you may demand it!' After this reply Dostoevsky, according to reports which appeared in the press next day, rushed out of the room.

In January Maria Savina, the young star of the Alexandrinsky Theatre, put on *A Month in the Country* for her benefit night. The play, in Victor Krylov's adaptation, was a great success and she exchanged telegrams with Turgenev. In March she came to see him at his hotel. Turgenev received her very charmingly, 'like a grandfather'. He was surprised that she played Verochka and not Natalya Petrovna. She invited him to a performance of his play which was still on the repertoire of the theatre. He sat at the back of a box anxious not to be noticed by the audience, just as Gogol had sat at the performance of *The Government Inspector* twenty-eight years before when Turgenev watched him at the Maly Theatre in Moscow. In the interval the news of his presence in the theatre spread, and the audience began calling for the author. Savina rushed into his box and dragged him on the stage amid the thunderous cheers of a packed house. Next evening he appeared with Savina at a reading in aid of the Literary Fund. They were both to read a scene from *The Provincial Lady*.

'When we came out on the platform,' Savina records, 'I of course did not bow to the applause, but applauded the author myself. Ivan Sergeyevich had to acknowledge the applause again and again. At last we began.

' "Are you going to stay a long time in our part of the world, your Excellency?"

'No sooner had I said my lines than once more the applause broke out. Turgenev smiled. The ovation seemed endless.'

Turgenev took part in many more public readings, twice together with Dostoevsky, with equal success. He returned to Paris a new man. He looked younger and more cheerful. His triumphant re-

Bougival

ception in Moscow and Petersburg was followed by the conferment of academic honours in Russia, England and France. Kiev university elected him an honorary member. In acknowledging the receipt of his diploma, Turgenev wrote to the rector that he would treasure it as a tangible proof of the spiritual bond that existed between the best representatives of his fellow-citizens and himself. 'My labours', he went on, 'were not in vain: they have been recognised and appreciated by people who, like you, are the honest servants of learning and education and I can say with Schiller—

*Wer fuer die Besten seiner Zeit gelebt,
Der hat gelebt fuer alle Zeiten.*

(He who has lived for the best men of his time, has lived for all time).'

On 14 June Oxford university conferred an honorary D.C.L. degree on Turgenev. James Bryce, who introduced him to the vice-chancellor, spoke of his wonderful genius which was shown 'in his romances and his descriptions of Russian life, which had led to the emancipation of the serfs'. Turgenev left a description of the ceremony in a letter to a Russian journalist. 'Oxford', he wrote from Bougival on 24 June, 'is a very delightful town; the weather was excellent; at twelve o'clock we, the newly elected doctors, in scarlet gowns and mortar-boards, walked from the house of the vice-chancellor to a special building, where these "commemorations"¹ took place; we walked two by two and the people stared at us; the building was packed with students and ladies; we were introduced to the vice-chancellor, who sat on a velvet chair; the Public Orator, who was also arrayed in a scarlet gown, accompanied each introduction by a brief address in Latin, full of compliments; the vice-chancellor replied also in Latin, shook hands with each newly elected doctor, who went back to his seat, and the audience applauded. When my turn came, I felt very nervous. However, everything went off all right. I had been warned that the students enjoyed the privilege of whistling and booing on that day—it is a sort of university saturnalia hallowed by custom—and that, as the Russians are still hated in England, I might expect a rowdy scene. However, contrary to these expectations, there was no scene and, according to

¹ Written in English.

Bougival

The Times, I was applauded more than the others. None of us made a speech. I received no diploma. The Oxford professors, as a sign of special favour, made me a present of my cap and gown, so now, if I should have to play in a charade, I can flaunt my doctor's apparel. Afterwards there were dinners, suppers, balls etc., but again without speeches, and thank goodness for that. It seems I am only the second Russian to be honoured in this way.'

In August the French Government conferred on Turgenev the curious honour of 'officer of public instruction'. He did not know what it was, he wrote to Madame Commanville, Flaubert's niece, but he was told that he could now sport a violet ribbon—'violet, not red', he went on. 'I have already picked up a gown of an Oxford doctor, which is a most vivid red; the two colours will match perfectly.'

7

In February 1880 Turgenev was back in Russia for the unveiling of the Pushkin memorial in Moscow. Ever since his return he had been toying with the idea of going back there for good. He told Lavrov that he was thinking of settling in Russia and 'breaking away from his old habits'. In fact, after his triumphant reception in Moscow and Petersburg the year before, his feeling of loneliness beside the woman to whom he had devoted all his life and who never cared for him was becoming insupportable, especially after he had met Savina and fallen in love with her. Anatoli Koni, a judge of one of Petersburg's criminal courts and a sensitive literary critic (twenty years later he was among the few people who put heart into Chekhov after the failure of *The Seagull*), had lunch with Turgenev in the autumn of 1879. Turgenev, Koni records, advised him strongly to get married. 'You can't imagine', he said, 'how lonely and wearisome old age can be when you have perforce to cling to the edge of a stranger's nest, accept kindness as if it were charity and be in the position of an old dog which is not driven out because people have got used to it and pity it.'

Turgenev gave a much more graphic description of the state of his mind in a letter to Flaubert from Bougival on 7 August. 'As for me,' he wrote, 'I am physically fit, but you can get an exact idea of

Bougival

the state of my soul if you lift the lid of a cesspool and look into it; and see that it is not an English water-closet, for that is usually clean.' Flaubert replied that he preferred the latrine state of Turgenev's soul to the gouty state of his body.

On 12 December Turgenev paid his last visit to Flaubert at Croisset. Flaubert was working on *Bouvard et Pécuchet* and (he wrote to his niece) Turgenev had given him new strength to carry on with it. He seemed to have had a premonition that he would never see Turgenev again. 'Your journey to Russia', he wrote to Turgenev on 26 December, 'worries me extraordinarily. I can't help feeling that it is much more serious than any of your previous journeys. Why?'

In Petersburg Turgenev spent a great deal of time with Savina. She visited him often at his rooms and he went to see her at the theatre. It was a curious sort of affair. He was sixty-one and she was twenty-five. The position was even more complicated than that. For Savina, who had been married at the age of sixteen to a provincial actor who was much older than she and whom she had divorced, was engaged to a hussar officer, one of the richest men in Russia, and at the same time was in love with a handsome young general. She was flattered by the attention paid to her by a famous man like Turgenev and quite likely secretly amused, too, by the ardour of a man of his age. On 12 April, her birthday, he sent her a gold bracelet with the inscription: 'To M. G. Savina from I. S. Turgenev.' On 30 April he wrote to her from Moscow that she was one of the best and dearest memories he had carried away with him from Petersburg. A week later he wrote: 'You have become something in my life from which I shall never part.'

Turgenev paid a visit to Yasnaya Polyana in May in an attempt to persuade Tolstoy to change his mind about not attending the Pushkin celebrations. Many years earlier when Tolstoy was ill, Turgenev wrote to Fet that he considered Tolstoy the only hope of Russian literature and that he (Tolstoy) could not and must not vanish from the face of the earth like Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol. When Tolstoy recovered, Turgenev prayed that he should go back to his writing again. 'Whatever he does', he wrote, 'will be sure to be good if only he does not spoil the work of his hands himself. Philosophy', he went on, 'has revenged itself in a most

original way on him: it has itself infected him, and our enemy of preaching has turned into a preacher. Perhaps he has got rid of it now and has become once more a pure and mighty artist.' But in 1880 Tolstoy became a preacher with a vengeance. For it was not philosophy but religion in a most acute form that he got on the brain, and he refused even to discuss literature. 'The whole thing', Tolstoy said about the Pushkin memorial, 'is just a farce.' Before his departure from Paris, Turgenev had sent Flaubert the French translation of *War and Peace* and, on receiving his friend's enthusiastic appreciation of the great novel, sent it on to Tolstoy. But it seemed Tolstoy was not interested. He was working on his *Short Account of the Gospels*, and Turgenev could only look on with dismay at the piles of Bibles in many languages with which the 'great crank', as he called Tolstoy in one of his letters, had surrounded himself.

Tolstoy tried his best to cheer Turgenev up. He took him to shoot woodcock in the evening. The birch trees were in leaf. The woods were full of snowdrops. Tolstoy put Turgenev and his little son Lyova at the edge of a big clearing, an ideal place for shooting woodcock, and himself took up a position further afield. But again Turgenev was unlucky. Tolstoy could be heard firing away, while Turgenev stood waiting in vain for the characteristic whirr of the woodcock over the top of the birches. At last a solitary bird appeared. Turgenev took aim and fired. He hit it, but it fell into a thicket and could not be retrieved. Tolstoy came back with a brace of woodcock in his bag. 'The man was born with a silver spoon in his mouth,' muttered Turgenev. 'He's always lucky.'

Turgenev told Tolstoy's wife that he was not writing anything because he was not in love. But that was not true. He had arranged to meet Savina on 28 May at the station at Mtensk and travel with her to Oryol. Savina was going to Odessa. She did not tell Turgenev that she was going there to meet her fiancé. At ten o'clock in the evening he was waiting on the platform with a bouquet in his hands. The train arrived with Savina in an empty first-class compartment. He kissed her hand, gave her the flowers, and joined her in the train. He got off at Oryol after an hour and a half a disillusioned man: Savina had revealed to him the object of her journey. On his return from Spasskoye he wrote to her: 'I find it difficult to

Bougival

explain to myself the nature of the feeling you have aroused in me. Am I in love with you? I don't know. When this sort of thing happened to me before, it was different. Oh, this irresistible longing for surrendering oneself entirely, when even all earthly desires disappear—I know I am talking nonsense, but I'd have been unspeakably happy if—if—But now that I know that it can never be, I don't feel unhappy. I don't even feel particularly sad, but I am deeply sorry that this delightful moment is lost for ever. I hope we shall keep in touch with one another, but the door which was half open, the door behind which I could dimly discern something mysteriously wonderful, is now closed for ever. . . . *Such* a letter you will never receive from me again. . . .'

In Spasskoye Turgenev was busy writing the speech for the Pushkin celebrations in Moscow, which, owing to the death of the Empress, had been postponed from 26 May (7 June N.S.) to 6 June (18 June N.S.). It was while he was thus engaged that he received the news of the death of Flaubert. 'I received the blow in a most brutal fashion', he wrote to Zola on 23 May, 'by reading the obituary notice in the *Golos* [a Petersburg daily]. I need not tell you how deeply grieved I am: Flaubert was the man I loved most in the world. It is not only a great talent that has passed away, it is a choice spirit, and a centre for all of us. I shall be back in Paris in three weeks at the latest and we shall discuss the publication of his novel which he could not finish and which *must* be published.' To Madame Commanville he wrote on 24 May: 'The death of your uncle was one of the greatest sorrows of my life and I can't accustom myself to the thought that I shall never see him again.'

In Moscow the Pushkin festival was transformed into another great triumph for Turgenev, who up to the very last day was the only personality that dominated it. Tennyson, Victor Hugo and the German novelist Berthold Auerbach addressed their telegrams of greeting for the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature to Turgenev. 'During the Pushkin celebrations', Annenkov records, 'Turgenev had his back massaged with steel brushes every night, suspecting, as he told me, that some "nasty stuff" had accumulated there [this is certainly a curious anticipation of the fatal illness that was to afflict him within so short a time], and during the day he remained jubilant and ready to face the labours of the great festival.'

Bougival

The monument to Pushkin was unveiled on Tversky Boulevard on 6 June (O.S.) after a religious service in the church of the Strastnoy monastery. Turgenev stood next to Pushkin's son, a Hussar officer who greatly resembled his father, and was the first to lay a wreath at the foot of the statue. The next event was a session at Moscow University during which Turgenev was elected an honorary member in recognition not only of his position as the greatest living Russian writer, but also as the greatest upholder of liberal ideas in Russia. He was given a rousing reception by the students. In the afternoon the Moscow City Council gave a dinner in honour of the delegates. It was at this dinner that Turgenev refused to clink glasses with Katkov. A short while before, Katkov had attacked Turgenev for his financial support of Bakunin, who had died four years earlier. The impression that these constant attacks made on the peasants at Spasskoye can be gathered from a letter Turgenev wrote to Stassyulevich on 20 May: 'On my arrival here I was met with the following piece of news: as a result of the explosion at the Palace [in February] the Emperor had ordered me to be immured in a stone pillar and to have a twelve-pound iron hat placed on my head. These are the sort of flowers that grow out of the seeds which Katkov & Co. are so assiduous in sowing.' There was therefore a good reason for Turgenev's 'insult', as Dostoevsky, who fawned on Katkov, called it. When Turgenev was afterwards reproved for ignoring Katkov's friendly gesture at the Pushkin dinner, he replied that he was an old bird and could not be taken in by a glass of champagne. To Dostoevsky he said: 'How can I be expected to hold out my hand to a man whom I regard as a renegade?'

In the evening of 6 June Turgenev appeared on the platform of the Noblemen's Assembly Rooms and in his thin, slightly lisping voice began to recite Pushkin's poem *The Cloud*. At the third verse he stopped: his memory failed him. People in the audience began to prompt him. He smiled and finished the poem together with the audience. At the end of the recital he placed a laurel wreath on Pushkin's bust. Pissemsky, who was on the platform with him, raised the wreath and held it over Turgenev's head, a gesture that again called forth a storm of applause.

On 7 June (O.S.) Turgenev read his speech on Pushkin at a meeting of the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature. After the

Bougival

speech he was again given a rousing ovation, but the speech itself produced a great deal of head-shakings among the literary fraternity and open condemnation from the Slavophil camp. It was not a very happily worded tribute on an occasion like that. For one thing, it was very long and involved and, for another, it was too intellectual and too critical an appreciation of the poet. What greatly offended some people, and the Slavophiles especially, was his statement that he did not think that Pushkin could be called a 'national' poet in the sense of a 'universal' one as they called Shakespeare, Goethe and Homer. He followed this up later in his speech by the suggestion that one day another poet might arise who would surpass his teacher, that is, Pushkin, and would 'fully deserve the name of a national and universal poet, which we do not feel justified in giving to Pushkin, though we do not dare to deprive him of it, either.' It gave Dostoevsky his opportunity next day. He did not hesitate to proclaim Pushkin a 'national' poet and he had the sense to pay Turgenev a tribute for his Lisa in *A Nobleman's Nest*, which made Turgenev, in his turn, blow him a kiss. Most of Dostoevsky's speech, however, had little to do with Pushkin. It was a typically hysterical paean to Russia as the saviour and inspirer of Europe, ending up with an invocation to 'the proud man' to humble himself and thus attain happiness and the prospect of becoming an 'all-man'. The effect his speech produced on the audience can only be compared to the mass hysteria at a revivalist meeting. Men wept and embraced each other, women fainted and shrieked hysterically, and, Dostoevsky adds, 'all vowed to be better men in future.' In a letter to a correspondent he declared that 'Turgenev and Annenkov rushed to embrace me and, pressing my hand, assured me that I had written a work of genius, but, alas,' he concluded, 'are they of the same opinion now?' Turgenev was certainly not, whatever he might have said to Dostoevsky in the excitement of the moment, if, indeed, he did say it. 'I can see it stated in all the papers', he wrote to Stassyulevich, 'that I personally surrendered myself to Dostoevsky's speech and that I entirely approve of it. But that is not so, and I have not yet uttered the cry, Thou hast conquered, Galilean! This very clever, brilliant and cunningly skilful speech is based entirely on a falsehood. And what in heaven's name did he mean by his "all-man" which the audience applauded so frenziedly? There is no

reason for his existence: I'd much rather be an original Russian than this impersonal all-man. Again the same intolerable pride under the mask of humility. But it is not difficult to understand why the audience was so deeply moved by these compliments; the speech, too, was truly remarkable for its form and tact. I'd be glad if you would say something to this effect [in the *European Herald*]. The Slavophiles have not swallowed us up yet.'

Turgenev delivered his final verdict on Dostoevsky in his letters to Saltykov-Shchedrin and Annenkov sixteen months after his death. Referring to an article on Dostoevsky by a Russian critic under the heading of *A Cruel Talent*, Turgenev wrote: 'He has correctly grasped the fundamental feature of Dostoevsky's work. He might have recalled that in French literature, too, there was a similar phenomenon, namely the notorious Marquis de Sade. That one even wrote, in addition to his *Justine*, *Tourments et Supplices*, in which he insisted with special delight on the voluptuous feeling one obtains from the infliction of refined tortures and sufferings. In one of his novels Dostoevsky also carefully describes the pleasures of one of these epicures. And to think that all our Russian bishops held memorial services for this de Sade of ours and even delivered sermons on the all-embracing love of this man! Truly, we live in strange times!' Earlier, he had refused to write an article on Dostoevsky, but he contributed fifty roubles to the fund to erect a memorial to him.

Before he left for France, Turgenev wrote a letter to Vsevolod Garshin, one of the most gifted short story writers who greatly influenced Chekhov and who already suffered from the mental illness that was to end in his suicide. Turgenev had not met him, but he admired his story *War and Man* and recognised 'an unmistakably original talent' in him. 'Every ageing writer who loves his work', he wrote to Garshin, 'rejoices when he finds successors to himself: you are among them.'

On his return, Turgenev was elected vice-president of the committee formed by Zola and other French writers to raise a fund for the erection of a monument to Flaubert. He even published an appeal for contributions to the fund in a Russian magazine which merely led to a furious campaign against him in the Russian press. 'The abusive articles in the papers', he wrote to Polonsky in

Bougival

December 1880, 'and the flood of anonymous letters I am receiving have proved to me beyond a shadow of doubt that, in appealing for a few pennies in aid of a memorial to my friend, I did a stupid thing.'

At the end of the year he wrote his short story *Old Portraits* in which he dealt again with the tragic fate of the peasants before the emancipation. He sent it to a new journal edited by Prince Urusov. 'This trifle,' he wrote to Prince Urusov, 'cost me a great deal of effort. I spent hours over a few lines. I am losing the knack for this sort of thing, and, besides, old age is taking its own or rather taking away.' He was again laid up with gout for weeks. He was hoping to leave for Spasskoye in early Spring, but he was delayed by illness and by the wedding of Marianne, Pauline Viardot's youngest daughter. His stay in Spasskoye in the summer of 1881 was his last and his happiest one. Polonsky and his wife with their small children were staying with him. He loved to take the children for walks in the woods to gather mushrooms. He used to tell them stories and laugh and romp about with them. In July Savina paid him a visit and stayed four days at his country house. He had a room near his study specially furnished for her and hung up the pictures on the walls himself. (He always referred to this room as 'Savina's room' afterwards.) It was a very hot summer and he had a special bathing pavilion erected on the large pond for the actress where she bathed every morning. In the evenings he sat with her on the verandah for hours and listened to her 'confessions', that is, her stories of her life on the stage. He took her out into the park early one morning to listen to the 'voices of the night' and he named her the birds whose songs they heard before daybreak. One evening he suddenly got up excitedly as they were sitting on the verandah and asked her to follow him to his study. There he pulled out a drawer of his desk, took out a note-book and read her one of his Poems in Prose in a voice that shook with emotion. It was entitled *To Her*. 'I can remember', Savina records, 'that in this poem he described a lifetime of unrequited love. "You have plucked all my flowers," a sentence in it ran, "and you won't come to visit my grave. . . ."' Savina asked him what he was going to do with his poem. 'I shall burn it,' he replied. 'It cannot be published for that would be a reproach from beyond the grave—and I don't want that—I don't want that.'

One of the most moving scenes in *Fathers and Sons* is the last one which describes the visit of his old parents to Bazarov's grave. To Turgenev it was the most convincing proof of true and unselfish love. He knew that he could not expect that from Pauline Viardot. Two and a half years earlier he wrote his Poem in Prose *When I am No Longer Here*. It was also addressed to Pauline Viardot. 'O, my only friend,' he wrote, 'O you whom I loved so deeply and so tenderly, you who will certainly survive me, do not go to visit my grave. . . . You have nothing to do there.' It is significant that all through that poem he speaks of his love for Pauline Viardot in the past tense. And it is even more significant that while appealing to her not to forget him, he did not want her to remember him amid her 'daily worries, pleasures and needs.' He did not want to interfere with her life. All he asked her was to pick up one of their favourite books whenever she felt sad and lonely and read 'the pages, lines and words' which had once upon a time brought tears to their eyes. Having read them, he would like her to close her eyes and stretch out her hand to him. 'Stretch out your hand to your absent friend,' he begged. 'I shall not be able to press it with mine: for it will lie motionless under the ground, but I feel comforted now by the thought that you will perhaps feel a light touch upon your hand. And my image will appear before you, and tears will flow from under your closed eyelids, tears like those we two used to shed together in former days when deeply moved by Beauty, O you, my only friend, O you, whom I loved so deeply and so tenderly!' But that, too, he knew was too much to expect from Pauline Viardot. Long before he had told his daughter that he could not expect Pauline to weep for him as she had wept for her mother. And yet—all the time he was at Spasskoye during that last summer of 1881 he was afraid, according to Polonsky, that he might receive a letter from Pauline Viardot summoning him back to France. There was no doubt in his mind as to what he would do if he did receive such a letter: he would have gone back immediately.

On 17 July the Polonskys celebrated the anniversary of their wedding. Turgenev gave a dinner in honour of the occasion. They were all very merry and, after the dinner, Savina rushed up to Turgenev, embraced him and kissed him with such tenderness that he never forgot that kiss. In the evening Turgenev organised one of

Bougival

his Spasskoye fêtes with peasant dances and songs. After the fête he read them his *Song of Triumphant Love*, which he had written at Spasskoye a month earlier. He dedicated the story to Gustave Flaubert, and for its epigraph he used the line from Schiller: *Wage zu irren und zu trauemen* (dare to make mistakes and to dream). This line Botkin had quoted in a letter to him soon after the publication of *The Diary of a Sportsman* when he was still trying to discover the 'niche' which, as Belinsky had told him, 'every true writer eventually discovers for himself.'

The *Song of Triumphant Love* is quite unlike anything Turgenev ever wrote. It is his only purely imaginative story, a story completely divorced from reality, an erotic story of magic and the magical influence of music. It seems to express the all-absorbing influence Pauline Viardot's art had on Turgenev and his recognition of his inability ever to possess her except by some means that lay outside ordinary human experience. It was published in the November issue of *The European Herald* and was a great popular success—the last success any work of his enjoyed during his lifetime.

On 18 July Savina left and a few days later Tolstoy, dressed like a peasant, arrived suddenly at Spasskoye at one o'clock in the morning. He spent two hours in Turgenev's study and Polonsky was astonished at the great change that had come over him. He no longer tried to impose his views on them, but listened quietly to Turgenev's objections. On 22 August Turgenev returned Tolstoy's visit. At Yasnaya Polyana they were having a party in honour of Sonia's birthday. Turgenev entered into the spirit of it and danced a quadrille with the young people. Then he took off his coat and, thumbs stuck into his waistcoat, danced the can-can with a twelve-year-old girl as his partner to the great delight of everybody except Tolstoy. 'Turgenev—the can-can....' Tolstoy noted down humourlessly in his diary. 'It is sad.'

It was during this last visit to Russia that Turgenev met Garshin and discussed the political situation after the failure of the idealistic attempt of the educated young people to enlighten the peasants. In Turgenev's view, the mistrust of the peasants for their former masters was so great that they regarded with suspicion any well-meant effort to help them. They even interpreted the Czar's order to them to obey their masters as meaning the exact opposite. The

Bougival

Czar, they said, was afraid of the landowners and what he really meant was that the landowners should stop throwing their weight about and obey the peasants. The cunning of the Russian peasant which he had condemned in his first memorandum to the Russian government and which he had declared to be the direct result of serfdom, had become the chief stumbling block to reaching a workable understanding with them after their emancipation.

The last weeks of his stay in Spasskoye (he left for France in the second week of September) were darkened by his growing fears of death. He had once more become obsessed by the magic of figures. He had convinced himself that he would die on 1 October, mainly, it seems, because the transposition of the last two figures of the year 1881 produced the year of his birth—1818. In a letter to Polonsky from Paris at the beginning of January 1882, he wrote: "The year 1881, during which, owing to a certain prediction, I thought I would die, has passed and I am still alive. I am getting more and more convinced of the folly of looking into the future.' It would have been a useless exercise anyhow: he had only twenty more months to live.

8

Turgenev paid his last visit to England in October 1881. On his way back from Newmarket, where he had been partridge shooting with one of his English friends ('I saw a lot of game', he wrote to Polonsky, 'but I missed most of them'), he was present at a dinner in his honour, improvised in a hurry by Ralston, at which he met Anthony Trollope, R. D. Blackmore, James Payn and other English novelists. 'Turgenev', Ralston records, 'had been greatly alarmed by the thought of having to make a speech . . . but it was suggested to him that he should not stand up and return thanks when his health was drunk, but should keep his seat and merely talk a little to his entertainers. He followed this advice, and the consequence was that he spoke without stiffness and at his ease, and with a grace and an amount of feeling, which none of those who were present is ever likely to forget.' Ralston proposed to give a banquet in his honour at a later date, but Turgenev would not hear of it. 'My dear friend,' he wrote to Ralston, 'there is no reason why

Bougival

Englishmen should pay me so great an honour. I am not worthy of it, and my enemies would say that I was intriguing for something or other.' To Polonsky he wrote from Bougival on 1 November: 'Ralston even wants to give a banquet (!!) in my honour—partly from sympathy with me and mostly (as he confessed to me himself) because he wants the English to regard him as the chief authority on Russian literary matters—but I'd rather cut off my nose than agree to such nonsense! Why should they give *me* a banquet in England? I daresay in Petersburg they are already accusing me of all sorts of intrigues for having been given the dinner—paid for it, etc. . . . The game is not worth the candle.'

He returned to Paris from Bougival at the end of November. He felt well, the gout did not bother him, and he sat down to work. He wrote his short story *The Desperate One* and was considering different subjects for a novel. One of them he had worked out in great detail. Two more he had only roughly sketched out. 'Is it possible', he wrote to Polonsky from Paris, 'that young leaves and even branches should sprout from an old and dried-up tree? We shall see.'

The ecstatic reception given to Sarah Bernhardt in Petersburg and Moscow at the end of 1881 made him very angry. 'I can't tell you', he wrote to Polonsky, 'how furious I am with the frenzied acclamations of Sarah Bernhardt, that arrogant fraud, that insufferable *poseuse*, who reminds me of a toad every time I think of her, and whom nature, by some incomprehensible caprice, has endowed with such a delightful voice, having deprived her of anything else.' An unknown medical student in Moscow, if Turgenev only knew, shared his opinion about Sarah Bernhardt, but Chekhov was publishing his articles on the French actress in an obscure Moscow weekly, and it would never have occurred to Turgenev's Moscow friends to send them on to him.¹

It was at this time, too, that Polonsky wrote to Turgenev about the extraordinary case of a friend of his, a zoologist, who fell in love with Kadmina, a young actress and opera singer, *after* she had committed suicide. 'The psychological fact you wrote to me about', Turgenev replied, 'is truly remarkable. One could write a semi-fantastic story about it in the style of Edgar Allan Poe. I remember

¹ See my *Chekhov the Dramatist* pp. 25-6.

seeing Kadmina once on the stage—she had a very expressive face. . . . Just think of it: wherever you look there is drama in life, and there are still writers who complain that all the subjects have been exhausted.’

This incident gave Turgenev his subject for *Clara Milich*, the last thing he wrote in 1882 when already stricken down by his fatal illness. The story is interpreted as Turgenev’s personal confession and as his answer to those who criticised him for his humiliating attachment to Pauline Viardot. Certain features of Clara Milich resemble those of Pauline Viardot. Clara Milich is described as dark and looking like a gipsy; like Pauline Viardot she had ‘a passionate, headstrong nature’, piercing black eyes and a contralto voice. But in writing the story Turgenev was, as already indicated, motivated by far graver reasons than an apologia for his love of Pauline Viardot. In it he gave an artistically imaginative form to the two themes he had touched on in his two Poems in Prose: *The Sparrow* and *When I am No Longer Here*, written four years earlier in April and December 1878. And it is with the note of optimism so characteristic of both that he ends his story:

‘Why are you crying?’ the hero of the story addresses his aunt a few moments before his death. ‘Because I have to die? But don’t you know that love is stronger than death? Death! Death where is thy sting? You must not cry but rejoice as I am rejoicing.’

‘And again the beatific smile lit up the face of the dying man, the smile that so terrified the poor old woman.’

Turgenev began writing his Poems in Prose, which he entitled *Senilia*, in 1878 (most of them, forty-nine out of seventy-eight, were written in that year). They contain his thoughts on philosophical, political and purely personal subjects. He sent forty-eight of them to Stassyulevich, who published them in the *European Herald* in 1882. The remaining thirty, which he considered to be of too intimate a nature for publication, were first published in Paris in 1930. Together they provide not only many invaluable biographical details, but also an insight into the most secret places of Turgenev’s mind.

9

Turgenev entered upon his sixty-third year feeling quite extraordinarily fit and full of optimism about the future. His last story was a great success, his obsessions with death had gone, he was writing cheerful letters to his friends and conducting a mildly flirtatious correspondence with Savina. 'You are dreaming how wonderful it would be to run away quietly abroad', he wrote to her from Paris, 'and I am dreaming how wonderful it would be to go travelling together with you for at least a month, and so that no one should know who we were or where we were. . . . We would go to Venice or Rome: two foreigners in travelling clothes walking in the streets or sailing in a gondola—one of them tall, clumsy, white-haired and long-legged, but very contented, and the other a tall and slender young woman with wonderful black eyes and hair of the same colour. Let us assume that she, too, is contented. They visit picture galleries, churches, etc., dine together, go to the theatre in the evening—and then. . . . And then my imagination respectfully pauses—is it because there is something to conceal or because there is nothing to conceal?' When Savina at last got to Switzerland and expressed her intention of going to Italy, he advised her to visit Florence. 'I spent ten delightful days in Florence many, many years ago (in 1858),' he wrote, 'and it left me with a most enchanting memory—and yet I was there alone. How much more enchanting would it have been had I had a woman companion with me, sympathetic, kind and beautiful (that above all!).'

These lighthearted letters expressed his mood perfectly. He had come back to life: the old, dead tree was putting forth living shoots. Then the first blow fell: his daughter's marriage had finally foundered. Gaston Bruère, her husband, had wasted all her money, he was demanding that she should get more from her father, he took to drink, he began to threaten her. In the end she was forced to run away with her two children, and Turgenev had to raise money to help her. He sold his horses, his carriage and his remaining pictures, including his much treasured Rousseau landscape. At first he found a hiding-place for Paulinette and her children in France, but eventually he got her away to Switzerland.

As he was making plans to go to Russia to spend another summer with the Polonskys at Spasskoye, the second and much more serious blow fell. One morning he got out of bed and discovered that he could not stand on his feet. The moment he stood up he felt a dreadful pain in the chest, shoulder and between the shoulder-blades, accompanied by difficulty in breathing. When he lay down the pain disappeared and, but for a light aching in the shoulder, he felt absolutely well. The great Charcot was summoned and diagnosed—of all things—angina pectoris. He told Turgenev he had nothing to worry about and that he would probably be able to travel to Russia within six weeks.

On 3 May 1882, Turgenev told Polonsky that he was suffering from a special kind of angina, a gouty one. His doctors even obliged him with its name: *cardialgia nevralis*, and they expressed the opinion that since his gouty condition was mixed up in it, it would be a good thing if he got an attack of gout, for that would most probably draw off the gouty condition from his chest. 'Well', Turgenev wrote to Polonsky, 'I did get an attack of gout, and in three places all at once. I had frightful pains, but I thought to myself: all the better! However, the attack passed and the pain in the shoulder remains.' The doctors cauterised his shoulder in fifty places, but he still could not stand up. They assured him, however, that his illness was not dangerous (he was actually suffering from cancer of the spinal chord!), but that it could go on for a long time. He believed them, but all the same wrote to Annenkov empowering him to act as his trustee in case of his death. He told him that the annual income from his writings amounted to 6,000 roubles a year, exclusive of the 1,000 roubles which he received from *The Diary of a Sportsman*.

On 20 May he felt a slight improvement: he could stand on his feet for two minutes and sit in a chair for a quarter of an hour, but that did not last. At the end of the month he was taken to Bougival. A fortnight later he gave up all hope of travelling to Russia. 'When you get to Spasskoye', he wrote to Polonsky on 11 June from Bougival, 'say goodbye for me to my house, my park, and my young oak tree—say goodbye to my country which I shall probably never see again.' His condition worsened and he had to have recourse to morphia injections. 'I am confined here like the Prisoner of Chillon,'

Bougival

he wrote to Saltykov-Shchedrin, 'and I have not even the consolation that Byron will write a poem about me and Zhukovsky translate it (the latter not much of a consolation).' He described his condition in three Poems in Prose: *Partridges*, *Nessun Maggior Dolore* and *Caught under a Wheel*, all written in June 1882, and all remarkable for the philosophic detachment with which he was still capable of bearing pain.

At the end of June his doctors contrived an iron frame for him which allowed him to get out of bed for a short time. In July he found it difficult to write, as the movement of his right hand increased the pain in the right shoulderblade. At the beginning of August he began a milk cure on the advice of another French doctor, which, curiously enough, seemed to alleviate his pain at first. He also started a journal in which he very methodically put down the progress of his illness day by day. He called it: *My Death Roll*. 'Today', he wrote in the journal on 2 August, 'I have begun my milk cure, which is to go on for forty-two days. First day: Wednesday, 2 August. In the morning a gnawing pain in the chest; pains recommenced at five o'clock and continued till 10—not very strong. When walking, pain in collar bone. At night two strong attacks at one o'clock and half-past four. Applied cotton wool. Caught a cold in the head again. Drank nine glasses of milk. Had a cup of clear soup for dinner.' On 8 August, the seventh day of his milk cure, he wrote: 'Great pains, especially in the evening. The night was not very quiet—from pains in the back. Ten glasses of milk. A cup of clear soup. First week—result: a slight improvement.' To Polonsky he wrote at the same time: 'You want to know who lives with me here: Madame Viardot and her husband¹; her daughter Claudie with her husband Chamerot and their two children, aged seven and three, her other daughter Marianne with her husband Duvernois and their three-month-old baby; finally, Madame Viardot's son Paul—the violinist. The young people will be leaving soon, and I shall remain alone with the old ones. I am being looked after excellently.'

At the end of the second week of his milk cure he was still able to report a slight improvement and he made up some of his lost sleep at night. But a week later he wrote in his journal: 'My illness is

¹ Louis Viardot died in his eighty-second year a short time before Turgenev.

gaining ground.' His main interest of the day, he told Polonsky, was the evening whist and occasionally a little music: 'the best possible régime for the oyster into which I have become transformed.' What worried him was that his iron frame was no longer of any use to him: after five minutes his pains returned. But he was still convinced that he would be able to carry on for another twenty years. 'The result of the third week [of his milk cure],' he noted in his journal, 'is the same as that of the second. The pain in the [left] collar-bone has established itself firmly: I shall never get rid of it.' At the end of the fourth week he had another setback. 'I must give up all hope of getting better,' he wrote in his journal. On 4 September he wrote a farewell letter to the Spasskoye peasants. 'Rumours have reached me', he wrote, 'that for some time much less vodka is being drunk in your village; I am very glad of it and I hope that you will keep on abstaining from drink: drunkenness spells certain ruin for the peasant. But I am sorry to hear that your children do not go to school regularly. Remember that today an illiterate person is worse than a blind or an armless one. As in former years, I am presenting you with an acre of woodland. I am confident that you will do no harm to my house or to my park or, generally, to my estate, and I rely on you to see to it. And now, peasants of Spasskoye, let me say goodbye to you all and wish you every prosperity. Your former landlord.'

During the next fortnight his condition again slightly improved. 'So far as my illness is concerned,' he wrote to Tolstoy from Bougival on 16 September, 'I believe that it has assumed a chronic character and, while not dangerous, it does greatly interfere with my life; it keeps me chained to this place for an indefinite period, for I cannot walk or ride in a carriage.' He asked Tolstoy to send him his *Confession*, the printed copies of which had been burnt by the order of the censorship, and in another letter a month later he assured him that, though he might not agree with him, it would never enter his head to *be angry*, for, he wrote, 'only young men who imagine that they know everything get angry, and I shall be sixty-four soon. A long life teaches you not to doubt everything (for to doubt everything means to have entire faith in yourself), but to doubt yourself, that is to say, to believe in something else and even feel a need for it. It is in this spirit that I shall read you.'

Bougival

Having read Tolstoy's *Confession*, he wrote to Grigorovich: 'It is a remarkable thing as regards sincerity, conviction and truthfulness. But it is based entirely on wrong premises and, finally, leads to the gloomiest negation of human life. This, too, is a kind of nihilism. Tolstoy, who incidentally will have nothing to do with art, surrounds himself with artists, and what can they make of his talk? All the same, Tolstoy is the most remarkable man of contemporary Russia!'

Countess Tolstoy had asked him to write a story for a children's magazine edited by her brother, and he wrote *The Quail* for her, a story which shows that, confirmed sportsman though he was, he could feel deeply the suffering that shooting inflicted on game birds.

In October his illness took a turn for the worse, and on the eighth of the month he wrote in his journal: 'I am again going downhill.' At the end of the month he discontinued his journal. 'I have given up entering the daily progress of my illness,' he wrote. 'It is not worth while. It has established itself for good. I may get a little worse or a little better, but it is absurd to hope for a recovery. To the end of my life I shall not be able to stand or to walk. I have got used to milk and I have no appetite for any other food, I shall continue to drink it, for it is after all good for my digestion. And now,' he concluded his 'Death Roll', 'enough!'

To Polonsky he wrote that it was not so bad to be an oyster. 'After all', he went on, 'I could have been deprived of my eyesight or of the use of my legs. And now I can even work. Except, of course', he added, 'that my personal life has come to an end.' And to Dr. Bertenson, the Petersburg specialist who had been to see him, he wrote on 8 November: 'Not only do I not lose heart, but I have even completely reconciled myself to my condition. A few more weeks and I shall lose all desire to get out of this immobility of mine which does not prevent me from working, or sleeping, etc. . . . Sitting or lying for 23 hours a day, I am simply terrified of any movement, which is now inevitably associated in my mind with pain. And why should I move about? Charles XII lay in bed (in Turkey after his defeat at Poltava) for eighteen months, though there was nothing wrong with him. And he did not mind! So why should I?'

Bougival

On 17 November he returned to Paris. Henry James visited him on that day and they drove to Paris together. 'The last time I saw him', Henry James records, 'in November 1882, it was at Bougival. He had been very ill, with strange intolerable symptoms, but he was better and he had good hopes. . . . At the moment I saw him . . . he was, as they say in London, in very good form, and my last impression of him was almost bright. He was to drive into Paris, not being able to bear the railway, and he gave me a seat in the carriage. For an hour and a half he talked constantly and never better. When we got into the city, I alighted at the Boulevard extérieur as we were to go in different directions. I bade him good-bye at the carriage window, and never saw him again. . . . He was the most generous, the most tender, the most delightful of men; his large nature overflowed with love of justice; but he was also a rare genius.'

In Paris, Turgenev's condition worsened. In January 1883 he was operated on for the removal of a neuroma in the abdomen. He was given a local anaesthetic and stood the operation well. Later he told Daudet that during the operation he was thinking of their dinners and looking for the right words in which to describe the sensation of the steel cutting through the skin and entering the flesh just like a knife cutting a banana. At the end of January, however, he told Polonsky that his 'old illness' had returned with redoubled force and that he had never felt so ill. He could neither sit nor lie, and was unable to sleep without morphia injections. His illness was progressing rapidly to its inevitable end. He had grown very emaciated, and he found it difficult to hold a pen in his hand. At the end of April he told Polonsky that he thought his end was only a matter of days. In May he was again taken to Bougival, but his condition had by then become desperate. 'My illness', he wrote to Polonsky, 'is getting worse and worse—the pain is becoming unbearable. In spite of the excellent weather, there is no hope of any improvement. My longing for death grows stronger and stronger and all I have to ask you is that you and your wife should wish that your unhappy friend's desire be fulfilled.'

Annenkov arrived in France in May. 'I have no other business in Paris', he wrote to Stassyulevich, 'than the terrible question of Turgenev's life and death. I saw him here and I often see him in

Bougival

Bougival. During our first meeting I found him lying motionless in bed. When he saw me, he burst into tears. . . . His incredibly strong organism is engaged in a struggle with his incredibly painful illness. A week ago it seemed that he was dying. His suffering was so great that it affected his reason. He demanded to be given poison, prayed for death, refused to see his dearest friends, whom he accused of conspiring to commit a legal murder, and called Madame Viardot, as she told me herself, a terrible woman who surpassed Lady Macbeth in iniquity.¹ The crisis lasted six days and in the end he got better. He remembered every detail of it and recalled it with horror and tears. He told me that if he ever resumed his literary work, he would describe the physical suffering that resulted in madness. "I was at the bottom of the sea," he said, "and I saw monsters there and a fight between horrible creatures which no one has ever described because no one has ever recovered after seeing those sights." The thought of a recurrence of his agonies terrified him, and he listened eagerly to the reassuring words of his friends.'

At the beginning of July he wrote his famous appeal to Tolstoy to return to literature:

Dear Leo Nikolayevich,

I have not written to you for a long time, for I was and, to speak frankly, still am on my death bed. I cannot get better, and it is useless to think of it. I am writing to tell you how glad I am to have been a contemporary of yours and to make my last and sincere appeal to you. My friend, resume your literary work! You have received this gift from where you have received everything else. Oh, I would be happy if I could believe that my appeal would have an effect on you! ! I am done for—my doctors don't even know the right name for my illness, *Névralgie stomacale goutteuse*. I can't walk, I can't eat, I can't sleep, but it is boring to repeat all this! My friend, great writer of the land of Russia, listen to my prayer! Let me know if you get this scrap of paper, and let me once more *firmly*,

¹ Turgenev had referred to Pauline Viardot as a second Lady Macbeth long before his illness in an aside to a friend during one of her musical matinées. It would appear that during his delirium the resentment he had always felt against her for depriving him of the happiness for which he always longed, the happiness of married life, broke through with uncontrollable force and on one occasion he seized an inkwell from the table by his bedside and flung it at her as she entered his room.

firmly, embrace you, your wife and all yours, I can't any more, I am tired.'

A fortnight before his death he called in Pauline Viardot and told her 'with tears in his eyes' that he wanted her to do him a great favour. He wanted her to take down a short story at his dictation. She asked him to dictate it in Russian, but he refused. 'If I dictate it in Russian', he said, 'I'd want to give it a literary form, and I'd stop at every word, at every sentence in order to choose the right expression. And I'm not capable of doing such exhaustive work.'

He dictated to her his last terrible indictment of the Russian aristocracy, *The End*, a prophetic story, the symbolic meaning of which is only thinly disguised.

Five days before his death Maupassant came to see him. Turgenev implored him to procure a revolver for him as he could not stand his torments any longer. He died on 3 September (22 August, O.S.) at two o'clock in the afternoon. Two days before his death he lost consciousness. Shortly before his death he seemed to come out of his deep coma for a moment. His last words were: 'Come nearer, nearer. Let me feel you all near me. The moment of parting has come. Goodbye, my darlings.'

'Our dearly beloved friend', Pauline Viardot wrote to Pietsch on 8 September, 'passed away quietly after two sighs—we were all near him. He died without regaining consciousness. The majestic calm of death has made him beautiful again. On the first day his eyebrows were still contracted by the last spasm of suffering, which lent his immobile face an expression of sternness and energy. But on the second day he became kind and tender again—he looked as if he were going to smile at any moment.'

During the last weeks of his illness Turgenev was under constant pressure—direct and indirect—to make his will in which he was going to leave all his property to Pauline Viardot. But, like Varvara Petrovna, he somehow could not bring himself to complete the necessary legal formalities. After his death two claimants to his fortune, or what still remained of it, appeared in the French courts: Pauline Viardot and Gaston Bruère. It was this 'unhappy affair', Pauline Viardot claimed in a letter to Stassyulevich, that prevented her from accompanying Turgenev's remains to Russia.

Before the train taking Turgenev's coffin back to Russia left

Bougival

Paris, a commemorative service was held at the Gare du Nord, at which Renan and Edmond About delivered funeral orations. Henry James was present at the service. Claudie and Marianne with their husbands accompanied the coffin to Petersburg, where it arrived on 27 September (O.S.). Turgenev's funeral assumed the character of a national mourning. Huge crowds, including delegations representing 180 different organisations and societies, accompanied the hearse to the Volkov cemetery: Turgenev had come home to stay.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Biographies

- Antsiferov, N. P. *I. S. Turgenev*. Moscow, 1947.
- Gutyar, N. M. *Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev*. Yuryev, 1907.
- Haumant, E. *Ivan Tourguéneff. La vie et l'œuvre*. Paris, 1906.
- Ivanov, I. I. *Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev—Zhizhn', Lichnost', Tvorchestvo* (Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev—his Life, Personality and Art). Petersburg, 1896.
- Kleman, M. N. *I. S. Turgenev. Ocherk zhizni i tvorchestva* (I. S. Turgenev: A Sketch of his Life and Art). Leningrad, 1936.
- Maurois, A. *Tourguéneff*. Paris, 1931.
- Pokrovsky, V. I. *Turgenev, yevo zhizn' i sochineniya* (Turgenev, his Life and Works). Moscow, 1905.
- Solovyov, E. A. *Turgenev, yevo zhizn, etc.* (Turgenev, his Life, etc.). Kazan, 1922.
- Yarmolinsky, Abraham, *Turgenev, the Man—his Art—and his Age*. Century Company, New York & London, 1926.
- Zaitsev, V. K. *Zhizn' Turgeneva* (Turgenev's Life). Paris, 1939.

Letters

- Brodsky, N. L. *Botkin i Turgenev. Neizdannaya perepiska 1851-1869 pushkinskovo doma i tolstovskovo muzeya* (Botkin and Turgenev. Unpublished Letters 1851-1869 at the Pushkin House and the Tolstoy Museum). Moscow & Leningrad, 1930.
- Dostoevsky i Turgenev: Perepiska* (Dostoevsky and Turgenev: Letters). Leningrad, 1928.
- Flaubert, Gustave, *Lettres inédits à Tourguéneff. Présentations et notes par Gérard Gailly*. Monaco, 1946.
- Georgiyevsky, G. P. *Pis'ma I. S. Turgeneva k grafine Lambert* (Turgenev's Letters to Countess Lambert). Moscow, 1915.
- Gorlin, M. *Neizdanniye pis'ma I. S. Turgeneva k Dukanu, Floberu i E. de Gonkuru* (Unpublished Letters of I. S. Turgenev to Du Camp, Flaubert and E. de Goncourt) Moscow, 1937.
- Halpérine-Kaminsky, E. *Ivan Tourguéneff d'après sa correspondance avec ses amis français*. Paris, 1901.
- Halpérine-Kaminsky, E. *Lettres à Madame Viardot*. Paris, 1907.

Bibliography

- Pervoye sobraniye pisem Turgeneva* (First Collection of Turgenev's Letters). Petersburg, 1884.
- Pietsch, Ludwig *Pis'ma Turgeneva k Pietschu* (Turgenev's Letters to Pietsch). Moscow, 1900.
- Pis'ma. Sobraniye sochineniy Tom XI* (Letters, Collected Works Vol. XI). Moscow, 1949.
- Semenov, E. K. *La vie douloureuse d'Ivan Tourguéneff. Avec des lettres inédits de Tourguéneff à sa fille*. Paris, 1933.

Reminiscences

- Annenkov, P. V. *Literaturniye vospominaniya* (Literary Reminiscences). Petersburg, 1909.
- Chernyshevsky, N. G. *Vospominaniya ob otnosheniyakh I. S. Turgeneva k Dobrolyubovu* (Reminiscences of Turgenev's Relations with Dobrolyubov). Moscow & Leningrad, 1950.
- Fet, A. A. *Moi vospominaniya* (My Reminiscences). Moscow, 1890.
- Goncourt, Edmond and Jules, *Mémoires de la vie littéraire*. Paris, 1887-96.
- Herzen, A. I. *Byloye i dumy* (Reflections on My Past Life). Leningrad, 1946.
- James, Henry *Ivan Turgenev*. The Atlantic Monthly, Boston, January, 1884.
- Moore, George *Ivan Turgenev*. The Fortnightly Review, London, February, 1888.
- Panayev, I. I. *Literaturniya vospominaniya* (Literary Reminiscences). Academia, Leningrad, 1928.
- Panayeva (Golovachova), A. Y. *Vospominaniya* (Reminiscences). Academia, Leningrad, 1927.
- Pietsch, Ludwig *Wie ich Schriftsteller geworden bin* (How I Became a Writer). Berlin, 1893.
- Ralston, W. R. S. *Ivan Turgenev* The Athenæum, London, September, 1883.

Studies, etc.

- Blanc, C. *Incident Daudet-Tourguéneff*. Paris, 1888.
- Brodsky, N. L. *I. S. Turgenev. Materialy i issledovaniya. Sbornik pod redaktsiey N. L. Brodskovo* (I. S. Turgenev, Materials and researches. Collected under the editorship of N. L. Brodsky). Oryol, 1940.
- Chernyshevsky, N. G. *Izbranniye sochineniya* (Selected Works). Moscow & Leningrad, 1950.
- Chulkov, N. P. *I. S. Turgenev—Rukopissi, perepiska i dokumenty* (I. S. Turgenev—Manuscripts, Letters and Documents). Moscow, 1935.

Bibliography

- Danilov, S. S. *Ocherki po istorii russkovo dramaticheskovo teatra* (Historical Studies of the Russian Dramatic Theatre). Moscow & Leningrad, 1948.
- Engelhardt, B. M. *Goncharov i Turgenev. Po neizdanykh materialam pushkinskovo doma* (Goncharov and Turgenev. According to the unpublished Materials of Pushkin House). Leningrad, 1923.
- Garnett, Edward *Turgenev: A Study*. London, 1927.
- Gettman, R. A. *Turgenev in England and America*. (With a Bibliography.) University of Illinois Press. Illinois Studies in Language and Literature. Vol. 27, No. 2. Urbana, 1941.
- Greys, J. M. *Istoriya odnoy lyubvi: I. S. Turgenev i Polina Viardot* (The History of a Love Affair: I. S. Turgenev and Pauline Viardot). Moscow, 1927.
- Gruzinsky, A. E. *Turgenev, lichnost' i tvorchestvo* (Turgenev—his Personality and his Art). Moscow, 1918.
- Izmailov, N. V. *Turgenev i krug Sovremennika* (Turgenev and The Contemporary Circle). Moscow & Leningrad, 1930.
- Kleman, M. K. *Ivan Turgenev i Prosper Mérimée* (Ivan Turgenev and Prosper Mérimée). Moscow, 1939.
- Kleman, M. K. *Turgenev v vospominaniyakh revolyutsionerov semidesyatiykh* (Turgenev in the Reminiscences of the Revolutionaries of the Seventies). Moscow & Leningrad, 1930.
- Kornilov, A. A. *Molodiye gody M. Bakunina. Iz istorii russkovo romantizma* (Bakunin's Young Years. From the History of the Russian Romantic Movement). Moscow, 1915.
- Kornilov, A. A. *Gody stranstviy M. Bakunina* (Bakunin's Years of Wandering). Leningrad, 1925.
- Mazon, André *Manuscrits parisiens d'Ivan Tourguéneff. Notices et extraits. Bibliothèque de l'Institut français de Leningrad*. Paris, 1930.
- Nezelyonov, A. I. *Turgenev i yego proizvedeniya* (Turgenev and his Works). Petersburg, 1885.
- Nikolsky, Yury *Turgenev i Dostoevsky: istoriya odnoy vrazhdy*. (Turgenev and Dostoevsky: the History of a Feud). Sofia, 1921.
- Zelinsky, V. A. *Sobraniye kriticheskikh materialov dlya izucheniya proizvedeniy Turgeneva* (Collection of Critical Materials for the Study of Turgenev's Works). Moscow, 1895.

Works

- I. S. Turgenev *Sobraniye sochineniy* (Collected Works). Moscow, 1883.
- I. S. Turgenev *Sobraniye sochineniy* (Collected Works). Moscow, 1949.

INDEX

- A Backwater*, 122, 147
A Conversation, 76, 79
A Correspondence, 60, 61, 75, 77, 78, 122
A Hero of Our Time, 85
A Journey to the Woodlands, 23, 166, 167
A Month in the Country, 25, 116, 117 n, 118-23, 150, 168, 290
A Nobleman's Nest, 29, 49, 68, 166, 176, 187, 190-2, 203, 204, 297
A Poor Bride, 143
A Strange Story, 224, 258
An Evening in Sorrento, 51
An Old Man's Tale, 39
An Ordinary Story, 88
 Abou, Edmond, 313
 Adam, Juliette, 273
Aesthetic Relationship of Art to Reality, The, 151
 Aksakov, Ivan, 136, 198
 Aksakov, Konstantin, 70, 136, 144, 147, 179
 Aksakov, Sergey, 17, 29, 49, 56, 70, 139, 141, 145-7, 149, 150, 169, 198
 Aksakov, Vera, 148
 Albedinsky, Peter, 242
 Albert, Prince, 184, 229
 Alexander II, 11, 68, 138, 142, 154, 159, 232, 233, 242
 Alexandra Petrovna, 193
Andrey, 70
Andrey Kolosov, 85, 86
 Anne, Empress, 18
 Annenkov, Pavel, 16, 53, 56, 72, 85, 89, 93-5, 97, 104, 122, 134, 143, 145, 146, 152, 154, 158, 171, 179, 181, 190, 191, 196, 198, 199, 202, 204, 206, 209, 214, 225, 235, 236, 239-41, 249, 250, 255, 260, 276, 277, 295, 297, 298, 306, 310
 Antokolsky, Mark, 267
Anton the Poor Wretch, 88
Antony and Cleopatra, 187
 Aristophanes, 98
 Arnim, Bettina von, 46, 63
Assya, 23, 130, 146, 172, 180
 Auerbach, Berthold, 295

Bachelor, The, 122, 123
Bailiff, The, 94, 96
Bakunin, Alexey, 57, 58, 61, 62, 83
 Bakunin, Michael (Michel), 28, 33, 52-4, 58-60, 65, 84, 102, 107, 149, 150, 202, 230, 232-5, 296
 Bakunin, Tatyana, 42, 46, 58-63, 69, 84
 Balakirev, Mili, 267
 Balzac, Honoré de, 117 n, 169
Barber of Seville, The, 81
 Bartenev, Peter, 249, 250
 Bausset, Louis de, 114
 Beaumont, Francis, 255
 Beethoven, Ludwig van, 141, 160, 164, 170

Index

- Belinsky, Vissarion, 28, 39, 41, 69-76, 80, 82, 86, 87, 92-5, 117, 148, 150, 170, 200, 217, 289, 301
Bell, The, 172, 181, 232, 233, 235, 242, 280
 Benedictov, Vladimir, 28, 39
 Benkendorf, Count, 15
 Berlioz, Hector, 78
 Bernard, Charles de, 48
 Bernhardt, Sarah, 303
 Bertenson, Leo, Dr., 309
 Berthe, Mlle, 111
Bezhin Meadow, 12, 19, 132
 Biron, Ernest Johann, 18
Blackbird, The, 263
 Blackmore, R. D., 302
 Boekh, August, 45
 Bonaparte, Pierre, Prince, 256
Book of Emblems, The, 26
 Borisov, Ivan, 187, 200, 239, 240, 259
 Botkin, Vassily, 17, 66, 72, 80, 93, 130, 131, 145, 146, 148-51, 153, 154, 158, 162-4, 166-70, 173-6, 179, 180, 188, 193, 194, 207, 218, 223, 225, 226, 235, 242, 301
Bouvard et Pécuchet, 293
 Brahms, Johannes, 227
Brigadier, The, 12, 258
 Brown, Ford Madox, 266
 Browning, Robert, 266
 Bruère, Gaston, 229, 267, 268, 305, 312
 Bruère, Paulinette, 59, 125, 129, 160, 163, 166, 172, 173 n, 176, 189, 192-5, 204 n, 206, 207, 211, 226-30, 247, 267, 268, 277, 287, 300, 305
 Bryce, James, 291
 Buchez, Philippe, 114
 Bulgarin, Faddey, 199
Bully, The, 85
 Burns, Robert, 153, 265
 Byron, Lord, 33, 37, 50, 64, 162, 307
 Caesar, Caius Julius, 49
 Calderon, Pedro, 99, 100
Caprice, 99
Carelessness, 82, 122
 Carlyle, Thomas, 181
 Catherine the Great, 18
Caught under a Wheel, 307
 Chamerot, Claudie, 228, 254, 258, 268, 269, 277, 307, 313
 Charcot, Jean-Martin, 224, 306
 Charles V, 92
 Charles XII, 309
 Chekhov, Anton, 83, 103, 131, 140, 288, 292, 298, 303
Chekhov the Dramatist, 303 n
 Cherkassky, Vladimir, Prince, 177, 189
 Chernyshevsky, Nikolai, 151, 152, 189, 199-203, 218, 232, 245
Chertopkhanov and Nedopyuskin, 276
 Chouchou *see under* Khovrin, Alexandra
Clara Milich, 122, 224, 304
Cloud, The, 296
 Commanville, Madame, 292, 295
Concerning 'Fathers and Sons', 66, 77, 200, 218, 259
Confession, 308, 309
Confessions of an Opium Eater, 168
Contemporary Review, The, 37, 85, 88, 92, 123, 131, 134 n, 139, 143, 146, 149, 151, 152, 180, 187, 190, 199-202, 204, 217, 218

Index

- Coriolanus*, 170
Cossacks, The, 169, 239, 286
 Crabbe, George, 153
Craquemiche ou le Dernier Sorcier, 226
 Creasy, Sir Edward, 184, 185
Crime and Punishment, 239
Croquet at Windsor, 286 n
- Dal, Vladimir, 69, 71
 Daudet, Alphonse, 270-2, 310
 Daumer, Georg Friedrich, 97
Dead Souls, 92, 135, 136, 218
 Delacroix, Eugène, 79, 103
 Delille, Jacques, 114
 Demetrius the Pretender, 18
Desperate One, The, 34, 303
Deutsche Jahrbuecher, 84
Devils, The, 44, 130, 168, 250, 251
Devocion de la Cruz, 99
Diary of a Sportsman, The, 12, 13, 36, 55, 62, 85, 92, 94, 95, 122, 130, 132, 137, 142, 143, 145, 168, 233, 267, 276, 279, 288, 301, 306
Diary of a Sportsman of Orenburg Province, The, 145
Diary of a Superfluous Man, The, 131
 Dickens, Charles, 182, 255, 267
 Diderot, Denis, 97
 Disraeli, Benjamin, 181, 182
 Dmitriyev, Ivan, 22, 23
 Dobrolyubov, Nikolai, 199-203, 218
Dog, The, 224, 239, 247, 258
 Dolgorukov, Prince, 43, 44
Don Quixote, 160, 168, 281
Dona Isobel del Solis, 114
Doppelgänger, 227
- Dostoevsky, Anna, 247, 248
 Dostoevsky, Fyodor, 44, 72, 85-7, 95, 130, 168, 173, 202, 203, 218, 225, 239, 244-51, 257, 289, 290, 296-8
Double, The, 87
Dream, The, 224
 Druzhinin, Alexander, 130, 146, 148, 152, 153, 158, 169-71, 190, 205, 206, 235
 Dubelt, Leonty, 137
 Du Camp, Maxime, 169 n, 236, 255, 257
 Durand-Gréville, Henry, 251
 Duvernois, Marianne, 299, 307, 313
 Dyakov, Varvara, 53
- Edinburgh Review, The*, 182
Education Sentimentale, 238
El Magico Prodigioso, 99
 Eliot, George, 266, 267
End, The, 312
End of Chertopkhanov, The, 275
Enough, 222, 223, 261
 Ense, Varnhagen von, 46, 53
Epoch, 225, 245-7
 Eugénie, Empress, 186
European Herald, The, 73, 255, 275, 279, 298, 301, 304
Evening, 38
Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka, 40
- Fathers and Sons*, 66, 73, 77, 187, 209, 215-20, 245, 279, 280, 281, 289, 300
Faust, 25, 51, 122, 150, 161, 261
Faust (Goethe), 54, 64, 162, 210, 224
 Feoktista, 133, 134, 141, 158

Index

- Fet, Afanasy, 140, 146, 153, 155, 163-6, 168, 175, 176, 187, 188, 207, 210-13, 215, 221, 223, 235, 239, 254, 266, 268, 285, 286, 293
 Fet, Maria, 210-12
 Feuerbach, Ludwig, 58
 Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, 57
Fille Elisa, 272
Fire at Sea, 44
First Love, 20, 30, 66, 199, 238
 Flaubert, Gustave, 16, 76, 137, 140, 236-9, 261, 262, 266, 267, 270-5, 277, 284, 287, 288, 292-5, 298, 301
 Fletcher, John, 255
Fortnightly Review, The, 287
Forward, 280
 Fox, Charles James, 184
 Francis I, 109
François de Champi, 101
Freeholder Ovsyannikov, 11
 Frolov, Nikolai, 46
 Frolov, E. P. (Mrs.), 46
- Galileo, Galilei, 126
 Gambetta, Léon, 273
 Garcia, Joaquina *see under* Stiches, Joaquina
 Garcia, Manuel, 77
 Gautier, Théophile, 76
 Gedeonov, Stepan, 83
German Reaction: Notes by a Frenchman, 84
Georgics, The, 114
 Girardin, Emile de, 199
 Glinka, Mikhail, 39
 Gluck, Christoph Willibald, 98, 196, 207
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang, 46, 54, 63-5, 89, 162, 210, 271, 297
- Gogol, Nikolai, 39, 40, 77, 86, 92, 95, 134-8, 148, 167, 168, 180, 240, 241, 290, 293
Golos, 295
 Goncharov, Ivan, 85, 88, 146, 175, 187, 188, 203-5, 240, 247
 Goncourt, Edmond de, 14, 24, 35, 76, 236, 271, 272
 Gounod, Charles, 116
Government Inspector, The, 39, 134, 136, 290
Governess, The, 123
 Granovsky, Timofey, 45, 47, 49, 50, 289
 Grigorovich, Dmitry, 85, 88, 146, 148, 151, 152, 154, 155, 309
 Grund, Friedrich Wilhelm, 57
 Guzkow, Karl Ferdinand, 98
- Hamlet*, 99, 152, 170, 191 n, 222
Hamlet and Don Quixote, 204
Hamlet of Shchigrovsk District, 34
 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 202
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 45, 47, 59, 64, 73, 263
 Heine, Heinrich, 79
Henry IV, 170
Her Ladyship's Office, 14, 123, 245
 Herwegh, Georg, 102, 109
 Herzen, Alexander, 17, 18, 32, 33 53, 68, 72, 85, 95, 101, 102, 105, 108, 111, 150, 162, 168, 172, 174, 177, 178, 181, 186, 209, 217, 221, 224, 230-5, 243, 244, 280
 Herzen, Nathalie, 105, 115
 Hinard, Damas, 114
History of Lieutenant Yergunov, The, 258
History of the French Revolution, The, 78, 98

Index

- History of the Middle Ages, The*, 114
History of the War in Spain, The, 114
 Hogarth, William, 143
Home Annals, 54, 64, 71, 72, 125, 131
 Homer, 53, 130, 162, 195, 210, 297
 Horace, 41, 140
House of the Dead, The, 239
 Hugo, Victor, 169, 236, 267, 284, 287, 295
 Humboldt, Karl Wilhelm, 46

Iliad, The, 170, 201
Imitation of Christ, 14
Inn, The, 144, 145
 Innis, Mrs., 206, 207, 211, 229
Iphigénie (opera), 89
Iphigénie (play), 164
 Ivan the Terrible, 27, 267
Ivanov, 131
 Ivanov, Afanasy, 55, 186
 Ivanov, Alexandra, 180, 192
 Ivanov, Avdotya, 59, 206

Jacob Pasynkov, 27
 James, Henry, 66, 265-71, 287, 310, 313
 Jerrold, Sidney, 66
 Jonson, Ben, 255
 Joseph II, 294
Journal of the Ministry of Education, The, 38
Julius Caesar, 170
Justine, 298

 Kadmina, E. P., 303
 Kant, Immanuel, 263, 285
 Karatayev, Vassily, 196, 197

Kassyan from Krassivaya Mech, 132
 Katkov, Mikhail, 199, 200, 218, 242, 244, 253, 296
 Katranov, 197
 Kempis, Thomas à, 14
 Ketcher, Nikolai, 142, 145, 214
 Kheraskov, Mikhail, 27
 Khomyakov, Alexey, 147
Khor and Kalinych, 85, 92
 Khovrin, Alexandra, 48, 49
King Lear, 38, 102, 170, 222, 282
King Lear of the Steppe, 259
 Kireyevsky, Ivan, 71
Knock-Knock, 275, 276
 Komarov, Major, 81, 82
 Koni, Anatoly, 292
 Koran, 115
Kosmos, 46
 Kovalevsky, Maxim, 288
 Krayevsky, Andrey, 125, 131, 152
 Kropotkin, Peter, Prince, 217
 Krylov, Ivan, 23
 Krylov, Victor, 123, 290
 Kudryashev, Porfiry, 46, 47, 55, 56
 Kutuzov, Princess, 23

La Pucelle, 114
La femme de quarante ans, 48
La Marâtre, 117 n
La Nouvelle Revue, 101
La République des Lettres, 287
La Vida es Sueño, 99
L'Assommoir, 272, 287, 288
L'Ogre, 226
 Lamartine, Alphonse de, 169
 Lambert, Yelisaveta, Countess, 31, 51, 68, 158-61, 174, 176, 177, 188, 193-9, 206-1, 2612, 218, 228, 229, 241, 242, 252, 264

Index

- Landowner, The*, 70
Last Meeting, The, 283
 Lavrov, Peter, 280, 292
Le Banc d'Huîtres, 98
Les Cinq Sens, 103
Les Provinciales, 103
 Lermontov, Mikhail, 85, 283, 293
Letters of Lady Montagu, The,
 114
Library for Reading, 199
Life for the Czar, 37
 Liszt, Franz, 42, 226
Living Relics, 272, 275, 276
 Livius, Titus, 168
 Lobanov, Fyodor, 26
 Louis XVI, 95
Lunch at the Marshal's, 123
 Lutovinov, Ivan (great-grand-
 father), 11
 Lutovinov, Ivan (great uncle),
 11-13
 Lutovinov, Peter, 11
 Lutovinov, Yekaterina *see under*
 Somov
Luzern, 173, 174

 Macaulay, Thomas, 181
Macbeth, 170, 222, 270, 311
Madame Bovary, 236
 Maistre, Xavier de, 103
Manfred, 37, 38
Manual of History, The, 114
 Markevich, Maria, 150, 194, 206
 207, 230
 Markov, Alexey, 49
 Martinez de la Rosa, 114
 Martynov, Alexander, 124
 Massinger, Philip, 255
 Maupassant, Guy de, 270, 271,
 275, 287, 312
 Maykov, Apollon, 248, 249

 Medici, Alexander, 92
 Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Felix,
 100
 Merck, Johann Heinrich, 65
 Mérimée, Prosper, 82, 135, 168,
 182, 185, 186, 239
 Meshchersky, Princess, 142
 Meshchersky, Yekaterina, 171
 Michelet, Jules, 78, 98
 Milnes, Richard Monckton, 182,
 185
 Mirabeau, Victor Riquetti, Mar-
 quis de, 29
Monk, The, 262
Monograph on Stankevich, 49
 Montaigne, Michel de, 238, 281
 Moore, George, 287, 288
Moscow News, 43, 136
 Mozart, Wolfgang Amadaeus,
 141, 244
 Mueller-Struebling, Hermann, 93,
 111
Mumu, 14, 21, 139
 Murchison, Sir Roderick, 184
 Musin-Pushkin, Mikhail, 136
 Musset, Alfred de, 78, 99
My Mates Sent Me, 109
Mysteries of Christianity, The, 97

Nabob, 272
 Nadezhda Nikolayevna, 158
 Napier, Sir Charles, 162
 Napoleon I, 114
 Napoleon III, 105, 111, 196, 236,
 255, 259
Nature, 263
 Nechayev, Sergey, 251
 Nekrasov, Nikolai, 85-8, 95, 131,
 146, 151-5, 170, 173, 190, 201,
 202, 245, 282, 283
Nessun Maggior Dolore, 307

Index

- Nicholas I, 36, 125, 137, 138, 142, 143, 158, 199, 234, 236
Niece, The, 134 n., 143, 144
 Nikitin, A., 180
 Nikitenko, Alexander, 38, 190, 191
No Money, 73
 Noir, Victor, 256
Norma, 89
Northern Bee, The, 199
- Oblomov*, 175
Odyssey, The, 20
Oedipus and Antigone, 148
Office, The, 95
 Ogaryov, Nikolai, 230, 242
Old Portraits, 299
On the Eve, 97, 141, 187, 196-200, 203, 204
 Orlov, Alexey, Count, 142
 Ostrovsky, Alexander, 72, 143, 240
Othello, 38, 170
Otello, 77
 Ott, 114
Our Age, 38
 Ozerov, Vladislav, 148
- Palmerston, Lord Henry, 182-5
 Panayev, Ivan, 56, 75, 85, 87, 88, 137, 142, 146, 151, 157, 167, 202, 235
 Panayev, Avdotya, 43, 76, 80, 83, 87, 171, 201
 Panizzi, Antonio, 185
Parasha, 69-71, 85
Partridges, 307
 Pascal, Blaise, 103
 Payn, James, 302
Petersburg News, The, 136
Petushkov, 96, 97, 122
- Phantoms*, 18, 49, 51, 125, 221, 224, 225, 239, 245, 246, 258
 Pietsch, Ludwig, 12, 93, 226, 227, 237, 275, 312
 Pisarev, Dmitry, 243
 Pissemsky, Alexey, 240, 262, 288, 296
 Pitt, William, 184
 Pletnyov, Peter, 37, 38, 40, 80
 Poe, Edgar Allen, 303
Polar Star, 95
Polikushka, 239
 Polonsky, Leonid, 22, 34, 53, 65, 66, 85, 146, 226, 236, 239, 250, 254, 259, 264, 267, 269, 274, 276, 278, 279, 283, 299-303, 306-10
 Polonsky, Josephine, 299
Poor Folk, 86-8
Prayer, The, 262
Precipice, The, 203, 204, 240
Prophet, The, 264
Provincial Lady, The, 123, 290
 Pugachov, Yemelyan, 18
Punin and Baburin, 14, 16, 27, 66, 275, 276
 Pushkin, Alexander, 13, 28, 37, 40, 147, 161, 271, 283, 292-7
Pyotr Petrovich Karatayev, 92
- Quail, The*, 309
- Racine, Jean, 164
 Ralston, W. R. S., 124, 240, 254, 266, 302, 303
 Razin, Stenka (Stepan), 18
 Reeve, Henry, 182
Reminiscences of Belinsky, 71, 73, 84
Reminiscences of Napoleon, 114
 Renan, Ernest, 313

Index

- Rendez-vous, The*, 132
Resignation, 28
 Rietz, Julius, 195
Rose, The, 115, 116
 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 166, 267, 287
Rossiade, 27
 Rostopchin, E. P., Countess, 143
 Rotheck, Karl, 114
 Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 157, 171, 174
 Rousseau, Théodore, 268, 284, 305
 Rubinstein, Anton, 226
Rudin, 24, 37, 49, 53, 65, 107, 149, 150, 158, 190, 191, 197
 Ruge, Arnold, 84
Russian Archives, 249
Russian Herald, The, 199, 204, 242, 243, 245

 Sade, Marquis de, 298
Salammbô, 272
 Salias, Yelisaveta, Countess, 134 n, 143
 Sallust, Caius, 168
 Saltykov-Shchedrin, Mikhail, 168, 203, 219, 270, 298, 307
 Salvini, Tommaso, 270
 Samoylova, Maria, 123
 Sand, George, 77, 78, 83, 100, 101, 155, 169, 273, 274, 276
 Sardou, Victorien, 255
 Sarrazin, Jean, 114
 Savina, Maria, 264, 290, 292-4, 299-301, 305
 Scheffer, Ary, 166, 173, 176, 192
 Schiller, Friedrich, 28, 63-5, 283, 291, 301
School of Hospitality, The, 148
 Schopenhauer, Arthur, 230
 Schubert, Franz, 227
 Schumann, Clara, 93, 226
Scotsman, The, 266
 Scott, Walter, 266
 Scribe, Eugène, 99
Seagull, The, 292
Sebastopol, 153
Selected Passages from Correspondence with my Friends, 94
 Semenkovich, Vladimir, 140
 Serebryakov, Leon, 26, 27
 Sesostris, 208
 Shakespeare, William, 98, 99, 142, 152, 170, 187, 210, 222, 259, 263, 270, 297
 Shchepkin, Mikhail, 122, 134, 277
 Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, 184
 Shevchenko, Taras, 194
Short Account of the Gospels, 294
 Sluchevsky, Konstantin, 217
Smoke, 147, 239, 241-4, 248-50, 253, 258
Some Decisive Battles from Marathon to Waterloo, 184 n
 Somov, Yekaterina, 12
Song of Triumphant Love, The, 122, 224, 301
Songs before Sunrise, 267
 Sophocles, 41
Sparrow, The, 262, 304
Sphinx, The, 179
 Spottiswode, William, 266
Spring Waters, 51, 166, 275
 Stacius, Publius Papilius, 40
 Stankevich, Nikolai, 28, 33, 45, 46, 48-50, 52, 53, 58, 142
 Stanislavsky, Konstantin, 124
Stanislavsky: A Life, 124 n
 Stassyulevich, Mikhail, 275, 278, 279, 281, 296, 297, 304, 310, 312

Index

- Steno*, 37, 38, 51
Stepan, 146
Sterne, Laurence, 103
Stiches, Joaquina, 77, 142
Stiches, Manuel, 111
Stowe, Harriet Elisabeth Beecher, 169
Strakhov, Nikolai, 249 n, 257
Strozzi, Filippo, 92
Suetonius, Caius Tranquillus, 168
Suvorin, Alexey, 274
Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 267, 271, 287, 288

Tacitus, Publius Cornelius, 41, 168
Tannhäuser, 258
Tatyana Borisovna and her Nephew, 62
Temptations of St. Anthony, The, 62
Tentation de Saint Antoine, 272
Teniers, David, 130, 284
Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, 295
Thackeray, William Makepeace, 174, 181, 182, 184, 185
Three Meetings, 51, 122, 123
Three Portraits, 11, 85
Thucydides, 41
Time, 245, 249 n
Times, The, 292
Timon of Athens, 37
To Her, 299
To Venus of Medici, 38
Tolstoy, Alexey, Count, 142
Tolstoy, Leo, Count, 31, 72, 151-7, 163, 165, 167-74, 176, 179, 180, 187-90, 206, 207, 209-16, 223, 239, 240, 283-7, 293, 294, 301, 308, 311
Tolstoy, Lyova, 294

Tolstoy, Maria, Countess, 31, 152, 153, 161, 174, 188
Tolstoy, Nicholas, Count, 188, 189, 206, 209
Tolstoy, Sophia (Sonia), Countess, 301, 309
Tourments et supplices, 298
Travels to the Russian Holy Places, 38
Tree-felling, 153
Trollope, Anthony, 392
Trop de femmes, 226
Tropman, 255-8
Trubetskoy, Nicholas, Prince, 171
Trubetskoy, Princess, 171
Turga, Khan, 18
Turgenev, Alexander, 140, 146
Turgenev, Alexey, 18
Turgenev, Fyodor, 18
Turgenev, Ivan:
 ancestry, 11-19
 birth, 11
 childhood, 21-32, 194
 education, 24, 26-9, 33-6, 39-41, 45, 56-8
 family crest, 18
 fear of death, 261, 262, 284, 302
 Hegelian, 42-6, 48-52
 his dogs, 89, 189, 190, 206, 259
 his love affairs, 30-2, 48-51, 58-63, 76-83, 89, 110, 115-22, 146, 147, 172, 173, 264, 277, 278, 293, 294, 300, 305
 his 'mendacity', 28
 his mistresses, 35, 59, 76, 133, 134, 158, 193
 idiosyncrasies, 16, 17, 20, 22-5, 27, 28, 31, 32, 41-3, 46, 53, 56, 57, 64, 72, 74, 75, 87-9,

Turgenev, Ivan:

104, 105, 112, 113, 172, 175,
188, 267-9
illnesses, 19, 34, 111, 166-8,
174, 175, 180, 181, 221, 245,
253, 274, 287, 295, 299, 306-
12
inheritance, 132
le grand Gogo russe, 269
life in: England, 95, 181-6, 206,
216, 260, 265, 266, 286, 302;
France, 95-127, 163-72, 174,
175, 268-312; Germany, 42-
8, 91-5, 172-4, 221-59;
Italy, 48-50, 176-9
music, love of, 79, 141, 160, 227
novels, 68, 97, 145, 149, 158,
166, 176, 187, 190-2, 196-9,
216-19, 241-4, 264-7, 275-
82
operettas, 225, 226
plays, 25, 37, 72, 82, 98, 99,
122-4
poems, 33, 36-9, 58, 61, 63, 67,
69-71, 76, 84, 85, 92
poems in prose, 50, 79, 115,
179, 224, 261-3, 278, 283,
299, 300, 304
political persecution of, 137-40,
142, 232, 233
politics, 21, 34, 67-9, 91, 92,
111, 177, 178, 196, 206, 211,
235, 255, 259, 260, 301, 302
powers of observation, 23, 24
public readings, 253, 267, 290,
296
Pushkin memorial celebrations,
292, 295, 297
reading, 97, 98, 103, 114, 115, 168
reconciliation with Russian
public, 288-91

royalties, 306

Russian, French and English
honours, 291-2

sale of art treasures, 284, 305

short stories, 11, 12, 14-16, 23,
27, 30, 34, 51, 60, 62, 66, 77,
78, 85, 86, 92, 94-6, 122,
131-3, 139, 142, 144, 147,
161, 167, 172, 221, 222, 224,
258, 259, 275, 276, 299, 301,
303, 304, 312

sport, 26, 55, 145, 190, 259,
294, 309

superstitions, 19-20, 224, 253,
284, 302

Views on: a work of art, 224;
an artist's conscience, 243;
art of writing, the, 65, 66, 85,
100, 101, 143, 144, 149, 160,
224, 240; Bakunin, 52-4,
150, 230, 234; ballet 103;
Balzac, 169 n; Belinsky,
71-5, 92-5; Botkin, 180,
235, 236; Calderon, 99,
100; capital punishment, 257,
258; censorship, 36, 73, 74,
135, 254; Chernyshevsky,
151, 152, 201, 202; Christian-
ity, 97, 252; comedy, 98, 99;
Confession, 309; contempor-
ary literature, 98; *Crime and
Punishment*, 239; death, 208,
216, 221, 235, 262; Dickens,
255, 269; dilettantism, 177;
Dobrolyubov, 199, 200;
Dostoevsky, 239, 250, 251,
297, 298; English, the, 185,
266; English literature, 266,
267, 287; faults of Russian
writers, 65; Fet, 140, 285;
Flaubert, 239, 272, 273, 295;

Index

Turgenev, Ivan:

Frenchmen, 236; French drama, 98, 99; French literature, 169, 170, 236, 270, 288; George Sand, 100, 101, 274; German national character, 64, 275; Germany's aggressive greed, 259; Gogol, 39, 40, 134-6; Goncharov, 205, 240; Hegel, 64; Herzen, 231, 234; his attitude to God, 224; his biography in his works, 51; his delight in self-castigation, 77; his dramatic talent, 124; his hatred of serfdom, 36, 91; his knowledge of English, 240; his poetry, 70, 71, 168; his political creed, 189, 235; *House of the Dead*, 237; imagination, 51; immortality, 208, 224; Katkov, 218, 296; Konstantin Aksakov, 70; Koran, 115; Latin literature, 114, 236; literature that smells of 'literature', 85, 98; Lord Byron, 64; Maistre, de, 103; mysticism, 224; Napoleon, 114; Nature, 103, 104, 113, 222, 223, 263; Nekrasov's poetry, 283; *Oblomov*, 175; old age, 261, 262; Oxford and Cambridge, 266, 286, 291, 292; Pascal, 103; politics, 61; prayer, 262, 263; *Precipice, The*, 240; Prosper Mérimée, 169, 185; 'pseudo-sublime school', 28; Pushkin, 40, 41, 296, 297; reading public, 144; realism, 66; religion, 148, 208, 262, 263; Richard

Wagner, 258; role of Russian intelligentsia, 230; Russia, 127, 186, 230; Russian Maecenases, 185; Russian peasants, 67, 68, 179, 241, 242, 301, 302, 308; Russian women, 141; Sarah Bernhardt, 303; Satan, 144; Shakespeare, 98, 170, 187, 188, 259; Slavophiles, 179, 240, 298; Stankevich, 28, 50; Tolstoy, 153-7, 168, 171, 174-7, 188, 210, 212, 215, 216, 239, 283, 285, 286, 293, 294, 309, 311; tragic element in life, 216; uniforms, 255; Walter Scott, 266; *War and Peace*, 239, 240; what is life? 113; *What's To Be Done?* 201; Zola, 270, 288

Turgenev, Nicholas (brother), 19, 22, 29, 35, 56, 128, 131, 284-7

Turgenev, Nicholas (uncle), 29, 30, 130, 159, 179, 252, 285

Turgenev, Nicholas (Decembrist), 67, 209

Turgenev, Olga, 140, 146, 147, 158, 242

Turgenev, Pauline (Pelageya) *see under* Bruère, Paulinette

Turgenev, Peter, 18

Turgenev, Sergey (father), 17-22, 30, 31, 35, 36

Turgenev, Sergey (brother), 19, 34

Turgenev, Timofey, 18

Turgenev, Varvara Petrovna, 11-17, 21-4, 27, 30, 32, 35, 36, 41-3, 47, 48, 54-6, 59, 67, 71, 75, 91, 97, 125, 127, 128, 131, 132, 228, 258, 259, 265, 312

Index

- Two Generations*, 123, 145
 Tyutchev, Fyodor, 48, 243
 Tyutchev, Mrs., 43
 Tyutchev, Nicholas, 140, 159
- Unhappy Girl, The*, 33, 258
Une Vie, 275
Upas Tree, The, 147
Uriel Acosta, 78
 Urusov, Sergey, Prince, 299
 Ustryalov, Nikolai, 114
- Vanity Fair*, 184
 Vassily the Blind, 18
 Verdi, Giuseppe, 77
 Viardot, Claudie (Didie) *see under*
 Chamerot, Claudie
 Viardot, Louis, 77, 78, 83, 102,
 110, 117, 164, 175, 307
 Viardot, Louise, 111, 112
 Viardot, Marianne *see under*
 Duvernois, Marianne
 Viardot, Paul, 172, 173, 207, 307
 Viardot, Pauline, 25, 44, 59,
 76-83, 88, 89, 91, 93-8, 101-5,
 110-12, 114-23, 125, 127, 129-
 33, 135, 138, 141, 142, 145, 147,
 158, 160, 162-7, 172-7, 179,
 181, 190, 192-4, 197, 206-08,
 211, 221-9, 233, 235, 237, 242,
 243, 252, 253, 255, 258, 260,
 264, 265-9, 276, 278, 299-301,
 304, 307, 311, 312
 Victoria, Crown Princess, 226
 Victoria, Queen, 183, 226
 Virgil, 40, 114
Virgin Soil, 191, 264, 267, 272,
 275, 278-82
 Voltaire, François, 114
- Voyage autour de ma chambre*, 103
 Vrevskaya, Julia, Baroness, 264,
 277, 278, 281, 282
- Wagner, Richard, 258
War and Man, 298
War and Peace, 239, 240, 294
Watch, The, 275, 276
Weakest Link, The, 98, 122
 Werder, Karl, 45, 46
Wesen des Christentums, Das, 58
 Weydenhammer, 27
What's To Be Done? 201
When I am No Longer Here, 300,
 304
When Will the Real Day Come?
 200
Whistle, The, 202
 Whitman, Walt, 276
Wilhelm Tell, 64
 William the Conqueror, 68
Wonder Book, The, 202
Woods and Steppe, 55
- Yelena Pavlovna, Grand Duchess,
 177
Yermolay and the Miller's Wife,
 15, 92
Youth, 153, 157
Yuri Miloslavsky, 28, 29
- Zagoskin, Mikhail, 28, 29
 Zakhar, 146, 155
 Zhitov, Varvara, 13, 41, 128
 Zhukovsky, Vassily, 307
 Zola, Emile, 270-2, 274, 287, 288,
 295, 298
 Zumpf, Karl Gottlieb, 45

SRI PRATAP COLLEGE LIBRARY
SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ Book No. _____

Acc. No. _____

This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]

SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ **Book No.** _____

Acc. No. _____

This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]

SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ **Book No.** _____

Acc. No. _____

This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]

SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ **Book No.** _____

Acc. No. _____

This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]

SRINAGAR (Kashmir)

DATE LOANED

Class No. _____ **Book No.** _____

Acc. No. _____

This book may be kept for 14 days. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of 10 Paise for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]